



NPA/25/037

# **Dartmoor National Park Authority**

5 December 2025

## **Fees and Charges 2026/27**

Report of the Head of Business Support

Recommendation: **That subject to any amendments proposed at the meeting, Members:**

- (i) approve the recommendations made in section 3 of this report; and**
- (ii) approve the 2026/27 schedule of fees and charges as set out in Appendix 2**

### **1 Background**

- 1.1 The Authority is responsible for a number of services for which fees are permitted to be charged in order to offset the costs involved. The Government requires that Local Authorities should raise revenue wherever possible to cover costs, which means that fees and charges (which include suggested donations) are reviewed and approved on an annual basis.

### **2 Current Situation**

- 2.1 The Authority needs to consider the fees and charges for each financial year during the budget setting process. Whilst many are not a major source of income, they do contribute to meeting the costs of delivering some services. The charges applied may be the difference between providing a service and having to withdraw it all together.
- 2.2 The fees and charges for the current year were approved by the Authority in February 2025 (NPA/25/008).

### **3 Fees and charges for 2026/27**

- 3.1 The proposed schedule of fees and charges for 2026/27 can be found on Appendix 2. At the 2 February 2024 Authority meeting, members agreed to the policy of annually raising car parking charges in line with the Consumer Price

Index (CPI), 2% being the minimum increase, reported in September from the previous year (NPA/24/06). The ONS reported the CPI rate of 3.8% for September 2025.

- 3.2 Car parking charges are an increasingly important source of revenue for the Authority, helping us to maintain relevant services.
- 3.3 It should be noted that, unlike the other fees and charges, which normally come into force from 1st April 2024, the proposed increase in car park charges will become effective after the statutory period of required advertising.
- 3.4 Members may recall that in 2024 officers provided an amendment to the 2024 fees and charges to introduce and increase the charges for the pre-application service. This service was reintroduced in June 2024.
- 3.5 The reintroduction of this service has been well received by customers and has been extensively used. It is proposed these charges are increased in line with the 2024/25 local government pay award of 3.2%. These can be found in Appendix 2.
- 3.6 The introduction of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) has significantly changed how local authorities assess and decide planning applications. Although BNG is designed to deliver long-term environmental improvements, putting it into practice adds new duties and pressures for the Authority, especially given existing limits on staff capacity and expertise. These new responsibilities include monitoring, checking, and enforcing Biodiversity Plans submitted with planning applications.
- 3.7 Delivering BNG effectively requires more than just assessing planning applications. Each authority must build biodiversity considerations into the whole planning process, ensure long-term compliance, and decide how to support wider elements such as the operation of an off-site biodiversity market.
- 3.8 Together, these tasks increase demands on council resources. To help manage this, it is recommended that the Authority introduce fees to cover the cost of monitoring and enforcing Biodiversity Plans. These fees would reflect staff time, overheads, and a standard charge for reviewing and negotiating the Biodiversity Plan at the outset. The total cost would depend on the size of the development site and would cover several monitoring stages over the 30-year life of the plan.
- 3.9 A daily rate of £350 + VAT would be included in legal agreements, with a maximum charge of £700 + VAT for any extra monitoring or enforcement needed during the 30-year period. This cap is intended to ensure the Authority can recover reasonable costs while still giving developers clarity about potential charges.
- 3.10 For work related to habitat banks where the Authority acts as the responsible body, this same daily rate would apply. However, because the workload can vary greatly in these cases, no maximum charge is proposed.

## **4 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 Most of the Authority's fees and charges (excluding planning fees) are not a major income source for the Authority and the income forecast for the end of the current financial year is likely to be circa £345,783, as per Appendix 1. The income generation is and will continue to be used to maintain the infrastructure that provides accessibility for the public.
- 4.2 The schedule of fees and charges, subject to Members approval, will be incorporated into the 2026/27 Revenue Budget, which will be presented for approval by the Authority in March 2026.

## **5 Equality and Impact Assessment**

- 5.1 The implications for access to services and the economy of the area are fully considered and addressed in all the Authority's policies, especially when considering charging for services. Consideration is given to proactively engaging those who may not otherwise access Dartmoor, being mindful of potential barriers and balancing the need to generate income and maintaining budgets that are flexible and responsive to the needs of service users.

ANGELA STIRLAND

**Background Papers:** NPA/25/06

**Attachments:** Appendix 1 - Income to date for 2025/26  
Appendix 2 - Proposed fees and charges 2026/27

20251205 AS Fees and Charges

<b><i>Fees and Charges</i></b>	<b>2024/25 Outturn</b>		<b>2025/26 Budget</b>	<b>2025/26 Actual at Month 6</b>		<b>2025/26 Forecast Outturn</b>
	£		£	£		£
Pre Application Advice	(15,475)		(25,000)	(15,760)		(52,104)
Filming	(24,280)		0	0		0
DHFP Membership fees	(1,183)		0	(1,083)		(1,083)
Guided Walks	(1,109)		(1,000)	(687)		(1,000)
Education Walks, Events and Ranger Ralph	(4,549)		(4,700)	(1,298)		(2,596)
Donations	(18,501)		0	(1,975)		(95,000)
<b><i>Car Parking:</i></b>						
Princetown	(52,006)		(42,000)	(35,217)		(42,000)
Haytor (Upper and Lower)	(91,586)		(73,000)	(68,792)		(73,000)
Postbridge	(28,774)		(31,000)	(27,901)		(31,000)
Lydford	(2,546)		(13,000)	(11,288)		(13,000)
Meldon	(44,710)		(35,000)	(31,015)		(35,000)
<b><i>Total</i></b>	<b>(284,719)</b>		<b>(224,700)</b>	<b>(195,016)</b>		<b>(345,783)</b>

**DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY  
FEES AND CHARGES 2024/25**

Appendix 2 to Report No. NPA/25/037

Description of Charges Levied (or Donations suggested)	Unit
<b>Administration</b>	
Photocopying - Black and White	A4 per side
(charges for sizes over A3 as for plans below)	A3 per side
Photocopying - Colour	A4 per side
(charges for sizes over A3 as for plans below)	A3 per side
Plan Copying – Colour (subject to copyright)	A4 per side
	A3 per side
	A2 per side
	A1 per side
	A0 per side
<i>NB: Copying charges that total less than £1 will be waived</i>	
Microfilm Copying	
Private Telephone Calls	
<b>Development Management</b>	
Planning Application Fees	
<b>Pre Application Fees:</b>	
Class A: Residential between 31-149 dwellings / Non-residential floor space 5,000-9,999 sq.m - 1 meeting	
Class A: Additional meeting fee	
Class B: Residential between 10-30 dwellings / Non-residential floor space 1,000-4,999 sq.m - 1 meeting	
Class B: Additional meeting fee	
Class C: Residential (including holiday lets) between 3-9 dwellings / Non-residential floor space 500-999 sq.m - 1 meeting	
Class C: Additional meeting fee	
Class D: Residential 1-2 dwellings (including replacement dwellings) including change of use to, conversion & holiday lets / Non-residential floor space up to 499 sq.m - 1 meeting	
Class D: Additional meeting fee	
Class E: Advertisements / telecommunications proposals/ Change of use where no operational development (except residential / holiday let)	
Class E: If a case officer considers a site visit is necessary	
Class F: Listed Building Advice - 1 meeting	
Class F: Additional meeting fee	
Class G: Other minor development including agricultural based development	
Class G: If a case officer considers a site visit is necessary	
Class H: Domestic Scale Renewable energy - solar, wind and hydro	
Class H: Non Domestic Scale Renewable energy - solar, wind, hydro	

2025/26 Rates (VAT @ 20%) £			2026/27 Rates (VAT @ 20%) £		
NET (£)	VAT (£)	GROSS (£)	NET (£)	VAT (£)	GROSS (£)
0.33	0.07	0.40	0.33	0.07	0.40
0.33	0.07	0.40	0.33	0.07	0.40
0.42	0.08	0.50	0.42	0.08	0.50
0.42	0.08	0.50	0.42	0.08	0.50
0.42	0.08	0.50	0.42	0.08	0.50
0.83	0.17	1.00	0.83	0.17	1.00
2.50	0.50	3.00	2.50	0.50	3.00
4.17	0.83	5.00	4.17	0.83	5.00
5.83	1.17	7.00	5.83	1.17	7.00
As photocopying			As photocopying		
Actual time			Actual time		
NET (£)	VAT (£)	GROSS (£)	NET (£)	VAT (£)	GROSS (£)
See "Government Scale Charges"			See "Government Scale Charges"		
720 (only to agree PPA)	144.00	864.00	743.33(only to agree PPA)	148.67	892.00
300.00	60.00	360.00	310.00	62.00	372.00
2500.00	500.00	3000.00	2580.00	516.00	3096.00
200.00	40.00	240.00	206.67	41.33	248.00
720.00	144.00	864.00	743.33	148.67	892.00
150.00	30.00	180.00	155.00	31.00	186.00
450.00	90.00	540.00	464.17	92.83	557.00
100.00	20.00	120.00	103.33	20.67	124.00
450.00	90.00	540.00	464.17	92.83	557.00
100.00	20.00	120.00	103.33	20.67	124.00
210.00	42.00	252.00	216.67	43.33	260.00
100.00	20.00	120.00	103.33	20.67	124.00
210.00	42.00	252.00	216.67	43.33	260.00
100.00	20.00	120.00	103.33	20.67	124.00
210.00	42.00	252.00	216.67	43.33	260.00
450.00	90.00	540.00	464.17	92.83	557.00

**DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**  
**FEES AND CHARGES 2024/25**

Description of Charges Levied (or Donations suggested)		Unit	2025/26 Rates (VAT @ 20%) £			2026/27 Rates (VAT @ 20%) £		
Class H: Additional meeting fee			100.00	20.00	120.00	103.33	20.67	124.00
Class I: Household advice (excluding site visit)	Planning Officer to determine if site visit required		210.00	42.00	252.00	216.67	43.33	260.00
Class I: If a case officer considers a site visit is necessary			100.00	20.00	120.00	103.33	20.67	124.00
Copy of Section 52/106 Agreement			Charge per page in scale of photocopying charges above subject to maximum charge of £15.00 (inc VAT)			Charge per page in scale of photocopying charges above subject to maximum charge of £15.50 (inc VAT)		
Copy of Decision Notice								
Copy of Enforcement Notice								
Copy of Appeal Decisions								
Copy of Appeal Statement								
Copy of Tree Preservation Order								
Planning Search			50.00	10.00	60.00	51.67	10.33	62.00
All postal requests carry a minimum £2 postage/administration charge. Actual postage will be charged if in excess of £2			1.67	0.33	2.00	1.75	0.35	2.10
Agenda – Copies of Minutes/Reports/One off requests			Charge per page (inc VAT)			Charge per page (inc VAT)		
Biodiversity Net Gain Charges								
Small site (0 to 10ha)						6235.00	1247.00	7482.00
Medium Site (11 to 20ha)						6400.00	1280.00	7680.00
Large Site (21ha and above)						7070.00	1414.00	8484.00
Biodiversity Net Gain Monitoring charges (Daily rate)						350.00	70.00	420.00
Meeting Room Hire								
Parke								
Meeting Room	Half Day (up to 4 hrs)							
	All Day (over 4 hrs)							
	Refreshments per delegate:							
	1st serving							
	2nd serving							
Cancellation charges	Notice of cancellation of 48 hours or more		No Charge			No Charge		
	Notice of cancellation 24 to 48 hours		50% Charge			50% Charge		
	Notice of cancellation less than 24 hours		Full Charge			Full Charge		
Car Parking at Princetown, Haytor Upper and Lower, Postbridge, Meldon, Lydford								
Cars - Per Day (24 hours)			4.67	0.93	5.60	4.83	0.97	5.80
Cars - Per half Day (up to 3 hours)			2.83	0.57	3.40	2.92	0.58	3.50
Blue Badge Holders			2.83	0.57	3.40	2.92	0.58	3.50
Coaches and minibuses - Per Day			9.33	1.87	11.20	9.67	1.93	11.60
Guided Walks and Education Walks								
	Guided Walks (Adult)							

**DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**  
**FEES AND CHARGES 2024/25**

Description of Charges Levied (or Donations suggested)	Unit
Walks, Talks and Activities	Guided Walks (14 years & under)
	Children Activities - (accompanying adult free)
	Private talks - Higher Uppacott - per group (max 20)
Education Walks	Walks up to 3 hours (per guide = 25 children)
	Walks up to 6 hours (per guide = 25 children)
Ranger Ralph	Annual subscription (per child)
	Events
Junior Ranger Programme	Annual subscription (per child)
Youth Ranger Programme	Annual subscription
Higher Uppacott	Bespoke Events
<b>Legal Services</b>	
<b>Public Path Orders:</b>	
Public path orders: Advertisements x 2 Preparing order, all officer time, administration, postage, legal costs, site visits, notices, negotiations with users etc.	Per advert
	Unopposed orders
	Additional orders linked to above
	Opposed orders
	Temporary closures
	Extending a Temporary closure & submission to Secretary of State
	Informal Consultations (includes consulting with interested parties, summarising responses and Authority Report)
Legal charges	Per hour
Copy / Inspection of Deeds or Documents (held in secure storage)	Per document
Section 106 agreements	Per hour
Certification of a document	Per document
Supply data to:	Non Public Body
<b>Environmental Information Regulations</b>	
Disbursement Costs:	
Photocopying - Black and White (charges for sizes over A3 as for plans below)	A4 per side
	A3 per side
Photocopying - Colour (charges for sizes over A3 as for plans below)	A4 per side
	A3 per side

2025/26 Rates (VAT @ 20%) £			2026/27 Rates (VAT @ 20%) £		
Various charges, which will be informed by the organiser prior to the event			Various charges, which will be informed by the organiser prior to the event		
60.00	EXE	60.00	60.00	EXE	60.00
75.00	EXE	75.00	75.00	EXE	75.00
12.00	ZERO	12.00	12.00	ZERO	12.00
FREE OF CHARGE			FREE OF CHARGE		
25.00	ZERO	25.00	25.00	ZERO	25.00
50.00	ZERO	50.00	50.00	ZERO	50.00
Delegated to Director of Conservation and Communities			Delegated to Director of Conservation and Communities		
NET (£)	VAT (£)	GROSS (£)	NET (£)	VAT (£)	GROSS (£)
See Below			See Below		
£1,000.00 plus advertising costs (plus VAT)			£1,000.00 plus advertising costs (plus VAT)		
£400.00 plus advertising costs (plus VAT)			£400.00 plus advertising costs (plus VAT)		
£2,000 - £3,000 plus advertising costs (plus VAT)			£2,000 - £3,000 plus advertising costs (plus VAT)		
£600.00 plus advertising costs (plus VAT)			£600.00 plus advertising costs (plus VAT)		
£60 per hour + Advertising costs + VAT (minimum charge £500)			£60 per hour + Advertising costs + VAT (minimum charge £500)		
400	80	480	400	80	480
80-140	OOS	80-140	80-140	OOS	80-140
37.50	7.50	45.00	37.50	7.50	45.00
Not applicable - service provided by DCC			Not applicable - service provided by DCC		
4.17	0.83	5.00	4.17	0.83	5.00
40.00	8.00	48.00	40.00	8.00	48.00
NET (£)	VAT (£)	GROSS (£)	NET (£)	VAT (£)	GROSS (£)
0.33	0.07	0.40	0.33	0.07	0.40
0.33	0.07	0.40	0.33	0.07	0.40
0.42	0.08	0.50	0.42	0.08	0.50
0.42	0.08	0.50	0.42	0.08	0.50

**DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**  
**FEES AND CHARGES 2024/25**

Description of Charges Levied (or Donations suggested)	Unit
Plan Copying – Colour (subject to copyright)	A4 per side
	A3 per side
	A2 per side
	A1 per side
	A0 per side
Microfilm Copying	
Staff Time: For every members of staff or agency staff involved in considering or dealing with a request for information	Search for Information. Identification & location of information. Retrieval of information. Copying of
<b>Filming on DNP Land (owned or managed) per day</b>	
Feature films	
TV Feature / Mini series / Drama	
TV Documentary / Children's	
Advertising / Promotional	
Commercial Photo Shoot	
National Park staff time	
Aerial Footage (including stock footage)	
News, current affairs or educational / schools	
<b>Officer support for Filming and / or Event Management</b>	
National Park staff time	
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	
Closure of car parks for filming, large scale or other events (minimum charge)	Low season ( 1 Oct - 31 March)
	High season (1 April - 30 Sept)
Creation of maps for external bodies (GIS)	Fixed cost based on half day
	Hourly rate above half day
Gateway Repair	Per Gateway (per hour - minimum 2hrs)
	Drilling/Gluing per fixing
	Fittings
Gateposts	Repair per post - or individually priced
	Replacement - plus cost of commercially sourced post
Dartmoor Hill Farm Project Membership Scheme	
Conservation Works Team - staff time	

2025/26 Rates (VAT @ 20%) £			2026/27 Rates (VAT @ 20%) £		
0.42	0.08	0.50	0.42	0.08	0.50
0.83	0.17	1.00	0.83	0.17	1.00
2.50	0.50	3.00	2.50	0.50	3.00
4.17	0.83	5.00	4.17	0.83	5.00
5.83	1.17	7.00	5.83	1.17	7.00
As photocopying			As photocopying		
£25 per hour (pro rata)			£25 per hour (pro rata)		
VAT will only be charged if the information could Be obtained elsewhere			VAT will only be charged if the information could Be obtained elsewhere		
NET (£)	VAT (£)	GROSS (£)	NET (£)	VAT (£)	GROSS (£)
From £2,500 plus VAT			From £2,500 plus VAT		
From £500 plus VAT			From £500 plus VAT		
From £250 plus VAT			From £250 plus VAT		
From £1,200 plus VAT			From £1,200 plus VAT		
From £1,000 plus VAT			From £1,000 plus VAT		
From £60 per hour / £360 per day plus VAT			From £60 per hour / £360 per day plus VAT		
Price on application			Price on application		
Free of charge			Free of charge		
NET (£)	VAT (£)	GROSS (£)	NET (£)	VAT (£)	GROSS (£)
£60 per hour / £360 per day plus VAT			£60 per hour / £360 per day plus VAT		
NET (£)	VAT (£)	GROSS (£)	NET (£)	VAT (£)	GROSS (£)
150.00	30.00	180.00	150.00	30.00	180.00
300.00	60.00	360.00	300.00	60.00	360.00
41.67	8.33	50.00	41.67	8.33	50.00
16.67	3.33	20.00	16.67	3.33	20.00
45.00	9.00	54.00	45.00	9.00	54.00
20.00	4.00	24.00	20.00	4.00	24.00
6.00	1.20	7.20	6.00	1.20	7.20
75.00	15.00	90.00	75.00	15.00	90.00
75.00	15.00	90.00	75.00	15.00	90.00
50.00	10.00	60.00	50.00	10.00	60.00
£60 per hour			£60 per hour		





NPA/25/038

# **Dartmoor National Park Authority**

5 December 2025

## **Improvements to Planning IT Systems**

Report of the Director of Spatial Planning

Recommendation: **That Members:**

- (i) **agree to the ringfencing of up to £60,000 from reserves to explore and procure improvements or replacement of the Planning IT document management system; and**
- (ii) **Delegate to the National Park Officer (Chief Executive), in consultation with the Chair of the Authority and Chair of Development Management Committee, the ability to authorise the award of a contract for the provision of a new Planning IT document management system.**

### **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 The current data management system that supports the Authority's planning service is coming to the end of its initial five year contract. To ensure that we are still achieving best value and that the system is performing to our expectations it is necessary to evaluate and consider whether the current system is delivering a good quality service to both the Authority, agents, applicants, businesses and the general public. To facilitate this, officers have commenced work to review our current systems.
- 1.2 The review process has been led by the Authority's Project Manager who has worked with the Planning Team to explore the current system and start the process to assess other systems which are available on the Market. The review process is planned to be concluded by the end of 2025.

### **2 Project Plan**

- 2.1 The current system used for development management processes causes significant frustrations within the team, as well as causing delays in the processing of applications at various stages. The aim of the project is to improve the functionality of the system (either by replacement or by improving

the current system) to improve efficiencies within the Development Management team. Included, as part of this work programme, is a review of current processes to improve efficiency in working practices for all teams, and for public users.

- 2.2 There is also a need to review the documents and data stored within the current document management system. Issues surrounding historic PDFs being stored as individual pages needs to be reviewed, as well as a policy for document retention going forward. This will be included during discussions with potential suppliers.
- 2.3 The following project plan milestones shows how the project will/has moved forward and the work:

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Dates</b>
Project Manager to spend time with teams to understand current situation	Sep 25
Develop communications plan	Sep 25
Review options for new systems	Sep 25
Contact other planning authorities to discuss their systems, processes and recent migrations if applicable	Oct 25
Current processes documented – possible workshop	Oct/Nov 25
Current processes reviewed for potential improvements	Nov 25
Risk assessment of current IT system	Dec 25
Book demos and initial discussions with potential systems identified	Oct 25
Decide upon and appoint supplier	Dec 25
<b>Begin project with the supplier</b>	<b>From Jan 26</b>
Develop to-be processes based on selected system	Jun 26
Update the website integration	Jul 26
Test scenarios developed	Sep 26
Launch	Dec 26

- 2.4 Whether the final decision is to replace the current system or to retain will be decided in the coming weeks. However, investment into our data management is required. The cleansing of data is likely to need additional resources and expertise as well the replacement of, or improvements to our data management system.

- 2.5 We have already made tentative enquiries regarding the cost of cleansing our data which would be in the region of £15,000, leaving up to £45,000 in the event that a new data management system was required.
- 2.6 Other funding opportunities have been explored and an application has been submitted to the Digital Planning Improvement Fund. If successful this will provide additional funding and can focus our work on improving our data, its accessibility and how it is stored.
- 2.7 The project team has been identified and will be overseen by the Director of Spatial Planning and managed by the newly appointed Project Manager.

### **3 Equality and Sustainability Impact**

- 3.1 Accessibility of information for all user groups will be paramount in the improvement or replacement of the existing data management system.

### **4 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 The funding for this project would be ring-fenced from the reserves. There are expected ongoing maintenance costs of circa £15,000 – £20,000, in line with current expenditure, which will be added to the medium-term financial plan.

### **5 Conclusion**

- 5.1 The Dartmoor National Park Authority Planning service is a key statutory service. To be fit for purpose and able to adapt to an ever changing and progressing service it needs to have a functional, accessible data management system.
- 5.2 The identified sum to deliver this project is £60,000. This sum needs member approval, for the Chief Executive (NPO) to authorise expenditure, as it falls outside DNPA Financial Regulations thresholds.

DEAN KINSELLA



NPA/25/039

# Dartmoor National Park Authority

05 December 2025

## East Dartmoor Landscape Recovery Scheme

Report of the Director of Conservation and Communities

Recommendation: **That Members:**

- (i) **Note the format and requirements of the proposed East Dartmoor Landscape Recovery Scheme and that it is due for submission to Defra for assessment in early 2026.**
- (ii) **Agree that the Authority should support, in principle, the submission of the East Dartmoor Landscape Recovery Scheme to Defra for assessment including the proposal to establish a new Single Legal Entity as the delivery vehicle for the Landscape Recovery project.**
- (iii) **Note the areas of concern/additional information required identified by officers and commoners.**
- (iv) **Authorise the National Park Officer (Chief Executive), in consultation with the Chair of the Authority, to make decisions in the best interest of the Authority during the Assurance stage.**
- (v) **Note that a further report will be brought to Authority at the end of the Assurance Stage to seek formal approval to be a member of the proposed Single Legal Entity and support the East Dartmoor Landscape Recovery scheme.**

### 1 Introduction

1.1 The Landscape Recovery Scheme is part of the Environmental Land Management (ELM) framework established by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). It focuses on large-scale projects that require collaborative efforts among farmers, landowners, and environmental organisations to achieve significant environmental benefits. The scheme aims to support projects that can last 20 years or more, addressing critical issues such as biodiversity loss, climate change, and water quality.

1.2 The key features are:

**Long-Term Funding:** The scheme provides long-term public funding, enabling projects to undertake extensive habitat restoration and land-use changes that require time to yield results.

**Bespoke Agreements:** Participants can codesign agreements tailored to their local needs, allowing for flexibility in achieving environmental and climate goals.

**Blended Funding:** The scheme encourages a mix of public and private investment, making projects more ambitious and sustainable.

**Focus Areas:** Projects under this scheme aim to restore ecosystems, improve water quality, and enhance biodiversity, with specific goals such as restoring rivers and protecting endangered species.

- 1.3 The East Dartmoor Landscape Recovery Scheme (EDLRS) is a round one landscape recovery scheme led by Devon Wildlife Trust (see below). The proposed scheme is focused on supporting nature recovery and resilience on a landscape scale. It is envisaged that the EDLRS will be a thriving, working landscape with outstanding natural diversity and resilience, where natural processes, such as soil and peat formation and natural woodland regeneration, play important roles. Strong networks of vibrant, dynamic habitats will show England's uplands at their very best.
- 1.4 The project has been developed over the last 2.5 years. Devon Wildlife Trust have been the lead partner working with the Authority, Woodland Trust, Natural England, National Trust, Oxygen Conservation, University of Exeter, RSPB, and Devon Biodiversity Records Centre (DBRC). The submission of the scheme is due at the end of January 2026.
- 1.5 The submission will then be subject to an assurance (assessment) process, led by a team at Defra. A decision on whether the scheme will receive funding for delivery stage is expected later in 2026. It is a competitive submission and there is no guarantee that all Landscape Recovery Schemes will receive funding for the delivery phase. The assurance stage is interactive and it is anticipated that the team at Defra will ask a number of questions that require a quick response. For this reason we are recommending that the National Park Officer (Chief Executive), in consultation with the Chair of the Authority, is authorised to act in the best interests of the Authority. If the EDLRS is successful at assurance, then a report will be brought to a future Authority meeting seeking agreement for the Authority to formally sign up for the scheme and become a member of the proposed single legal entity (see below).
- 1.6 East Dartmoor Landscape Recovery – Vision

East Dartmoor is a special place. Its moors, wooded valleys and upland farms support a vibrant rural economy and provide critical refuge for rare and threatened wildlife. But this landscape is under increasing pressure. Biodiversity loss, climate change, rising visitor numbers and changes to agricultural subsidy mean that rural businesses, and the ecosystems they depend on, face an uncertain future.

Through the East Dartmoor Landscape Recovery Scheme, a local partnership of landowners, farmers and conservation organisations will work together to build ecological and economic resilience, securing the future of this unique landscape.

The changes identified in the Vision (see appendix 2) will provide ecosystem services such as clean air, carbon storage, resilience to climate change as well as

improvements to access and engagement., enabling local communities and visitors to deepen their connection to East Dartmoor's natural and cultural heritage.

To achieve these changes, dedicated advisors will provide support to landowners and managers, working together to implement a realistic, evidence-based plan.

Rare and threatened species have been selected as flagships for the project. These are representative of the range of priority habitats found in East Dartmoor and fluctuations in their populations are good indicators of the health of their preferred habitat. Long-term monitoring of these wildlife populations, alongside the measurement of other environmental metrics, will provide an overview of ecological health in East Dartmoor.

## **2 Background**

- 2.1 DNPA are the single largest landowner within the EDLRS with land at Haytor Common and six woodlands (Appendix 1). The proposed objectives and implications are outlined in Appendix 3 (Haytor Upland Enhancement Plan) and Appendix 4(Wilder Woods)
- 2.2 DNPA staff have been actively involved in the various groups for the commons, woodlands, stakeholder engagement and access, as well as the governance group. However, the overall coordination and delivery of the documents and plans have fallen to the delivery team at Devon Wildlife Trust.
- 2.3 Critical to the submission at the end of January will be how all the plans interact with each other and how the EDLRS will be governed. The governance structure for the Single Legal Entity (SLE) as required by Defra, is being determined by the Governance Group before submission.

## **3 Dartmoor National Park Authority's Common Land**

- 3.1 Dartmoor National Park Authority's common land ownership across Haytor and Trendlebere amounts to 432 hectares The Haytor and Bagtor Upland Enhancement Plan (Appendix 3) outlines how through the EDLRS it aims to restore a favourable habitat mosaic, enhancing the conditions for target species. It is important to note that this is a draft proposal and subject to change through the remainder of the development phase and the Defra assurance stage.
- 3.2 There are 6 key objectives on Haytor and Bagtor:
  - (1) restoration of a natural upland habitat mosaic underpinned by a naturalistic grazing regime,
  - (2) establishing dynamic management, with regular stock movements and changes in grazing pressure over time,
  - (3) improving habitat for marsh and pearl-bordered fritillaries in sites with existing populations,
  - (4) maintaining and enhancing mire habitat for breeding curlew,
  - (5) restoring features designated under the SSSI to favourable condition and
  - (6) maintenance of access provision as a key visitor hotspot and managing negative impacts of visitor pressure.

3.3 The plan currently outlines how, initially, work will be required to reduce the dominance of bracken and gorse in some areas. Reduced grazing pressure in some areas of heathland will address fragmentation and improve habitat condition. Regular stock movements and changes in grazing pressure over time will create dynamism and support vegetation regeneration, improve ecosystem health and provide a strong foundation for farm businesses. Targeted management in key areas will enhance habitat conditions for flagship species and protect important historic sites.

3.4 The EDLRS will focus on restoring a healthy upland mosaic, supporting the recovery of threatened habitats and species. Whilst objectives are similar to previous Agri-environment schemes, there are four main differences between this and previous approaches:

1. Increased focus on natural processes
2. Increased control over stock movements
3. Adaptive management to respond to changes and create dynamism in the system
4. Valuing ecosystem services, including biodiversity, flood management and carbon storage.

In practice, this means that

- (a) there will be more active management of livestock movements required,
- (b) that the number of animals and grazing period will be adapted over time to achieve the outcomes and
- (c) that the distribution of habitats mapped may change over time. However, this will be maintained within 20% of the baseline of the agreed plan.

3.5 This novel approach, which will evolve over the course of the implementation period, will increase the ecological health of the uplands and provide a strong foundation for farm businesses

### 3.6 **Delivering the Objectives**

3.6.1 An Upland Facilitator employed by the SLE will work with graziers, the commoners' association and landowners to achieve the outcomes detailed in the Upland Enhancement Plan for Haytor and Bagtor.

3.6.2 This will be a close and collaborative partnership which will help to safeguard desired outcomes, promote knowledge exchange and enable adaptive management of the land.

3.6.3 Working with the land managers, the Upland Facilitator will create an implementation plan for each upland area and will provide support in implementing it.

3.6.4 This plan will include:

- A grazing plan per grazier
- Vegetation management plan (creating the mosaic)

- Invasive species management plan and
- Integrated fire management plan

3.6.5 Currently the Upland Enhancement Plan for Haytor outlines the following timetable from the start of the delivery phase.

### **Preparation and restoration phase**

Year 1:

Create and refine the grazing plan

Train livestock to the collars and trial their use

Establish necessary infrastructure (e.g. water supply).

Years 1-5:

Mechanical interventions and prescriptive burning to restore a favourable habitat mosaic as detailed in the UEP.

### **Implementation phase**

Year 6 onwards:

Implementation of the adaptive grazing plan. Throughout this period, grazing will be the primary tool, with mechanical intervention and controlled burning used where necessary, to achieve the objectives detailed in the UEP.

3.7 The Authority received the Upland Enhancement Plan in mid-November and on 19 November met with the active graziers on Haytor common, alongside the EDLRS Project Lead, Nathan Robinson. The key issues raised by the commoners included:

- Legal agreement – break points and liability regarding potential future sale of home farms and new owners wanting to exercise full common rights
- No-fence collars – how effective they will be given size of paddocks and visitor pressure/animal welfare issues
- Grazing plans – how these will be developed, who will set stocking rates, how they will be monitored and how the plans sit within the legal agreement.
- Governance – commoner representation on the SLE and overall equity
- Management – concern about how you manage bracken and gorse in absence of chemicals and practical concerns about mechanical intervention and targeting of grazing
- Monitoring and enforcement – what happens if there is no change over a period of time despite commoners implementing required management actions.

3.8 Following the meeting the commoners present indicated their principal support for the EDLRS subject to clarification and answers on the concerns that they raised.

3.9 Following on the discussions with the EDLR and Haytor Commoners, DNPA has highlighted the following concerns:

1. *What payments will the landowners receive (if any) for supporting the commoners in the management of the common (Access, cultural heritage, public benefits and nature recovery)?*

It is assumed that the Authority will negotiate the financial terms with the Commons Association as co-signatory on the agreement.



2. *What liabilities do DNPA have as landowners?*

These are to be determined however, they are likely to be similar to current agri-environment schemes.

3. *How do the management plans for the commons allow for effective access management and protection of the cultural heritage.?*

Access management and enhancement of the historic environment are highlighted within the Upland Enhancement Plan as a priority.

- 3.10 We have also indicated the need for more detail about certain issues, including: the proposed use of no-fence collars for cattle and the process for preparing, implementing, monitoring and altering grazing plans.

4. **Dartmoor National Park Authority's Woodland**

- 4.1 DNPA owns woodland at seven different sites, totalling 71 hectares, within the EDLRS. These are at

Castor Copse;  
East Park Copse;  
Sanduck Wood;  
Huntingpark Wood;  
Steward Wood;  
Wray Cleave;  
Casely Wood

- 4.2 The project element of the EDLRS for woodland is referred to as 'Wilder Woods' (Appendix Four). The overall scheme sets out that as an owner of woodland DNPA must strive to improve the ecological condition of any woodland on our holding. It is important to note that this is a draft proposal and subject to change through the remainder of the development phase and the Defra Assurance stage. Through active management the project aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Condition of existing woodland improved
- Temporary and permanent open space increased
- Deadwood volume increased (both fallen and standing)
- Age and height range of trees increased
- Diversity of ground flora increased
- Tree and shrub species richness increased
- Increased recruitment of young trees
- Tree cavities increased

- 4.3 These specific management actions will be outlined within a woodland management plan and at the start of project implementation, DNPA would support the Woodland Facilitator to produce a detailed 5-year plan for our woodland. Progress against this plan will be reviewed at regular intervals, with new management plans produced every 5 years throughout the 20-year agreement. With the support of advisors and project staff DNPA would be expected to ensure delivery of a bespoke woodland management plan and meet the criteria outlined in Appendix Four.

- 4.4 The indicative annual revenue payments for the woodland plans are currently set at

**Wilder Woods – indicative annual revenue payment\***

Native Broadleaf **£533 per hectare**

Continuous Cover Forestry: **£533 per hectare**

Conifer plantation: **£301 per hectare**

*\* Please note this is subject to change*

At the rates proposed at submission of the EDLRS this would mean that annually DNPA woodlands would benefit from approximately £40,000 per annum in revenue payments and additional capital grant support where applicable.

- 4.5 Currently DNPA woodlands do not provide a significant income and therefore this represents a sizeable increase in monies for the Authority.
- 4.6 We have asked Devon Wildlife Trust for further details about the implications of signing up our woodlands for any future disposal of the woodlands; support for the woodland management process and consideration of additional access to suitable woodlands.

## **5 Site Access Plan**

- 5.1 DNPA Access and Recreation team have been working with partners across the EDLRS and have delivered a comprehensive Site Access Plan. There are some additional elements to be completed before submission in January including how it links to the plans above and the Stakeholder Engagement Plan to better understand how it helps with visitor engagement.
- 5.2 The Site Access Plan (SAP) for EDLRS includes a range of access opportunities for the public. The project area is composed of 1646 hectares of Common Land and 444 hectares of Access Land under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. There are 16 miles (25 km) of public bridleway, 19 miles (30 km) of public footpath, and 2 miles (3.5km) of permissive footpath.
- 5.3 The SAP has focussed on improving the access opportunities, for walkers, cyclists and horse riders, to sites where increased visitation can be best sustained. Through physical and digital interpretation and upgrading waymarking proposed under the SAP, public access can be better managed and sensitive sites better protected. The phased funding of interpretation resources allows for updating of interpretation over the length of the project meaning the content remains relevant, informative and engaging.
- 5.4 The SAP identifies just over one million pounds of improvements to the access network in the EDLRA including footpaths, car parks, waymarking and interpretation. The submission identifies this funding being spent predominantly over the first five years.
- 5.5 The SAP also includes a part-time project officer. However, this would look to be enhanced to full time across all three LRAs to manage diversions and site access works. The roles salary and overheads would then be split accordingly across the three Dartmoor Landscape Recovery schemes' as the team are also working on the

equivalent plans for the Central Dartmoor and Walkham Valley Landscape Recovery Schemes.

- 5.6 It is important that the Access Plan is cognisant of wider Dartmoor initiatives and ensures that there is a holistic view of the delivery for Dartmoor.

## **6 Stakeholder Engagement Plan**

- 6.1 The Head of Communications and Engagement has been working with the stakeholders in the EDLRS to deliver a Stakeholder Engagement Plan. This has been a significant piece of work that is currently being mapped alongside the Site Access Plan. At submission it will outline exactly how the EDLRS will engage, interact and inform the multitude of stakeholders who are currently visiting the area and the opportunities to reach new audiences.
- 6.2 The plan includes a budget for roles to deliver community/education engagement and comms support with these posts expected to sit with partners as required.

## **7 Single Legal Entity**

- 7.1 Defra have stated that all Landscape Recovery Schemes must be governed by a Single Legal Entity, which could be an existing organisation or a new one. The governance group of the EDLRS have been considering a number of options and models and at the time of drafting this paper the model proposed for submission is an independent Community Interest Company (CIC) under the legal structure of a Company Limited by Guarantee.
- 7.2 The final decision on the specific remit and governance of the CIC will only be made once EDLRS has been passed through assurance, this is likely to be in the latter stages of 2026. DNPA's role within this is currently as a landowner member with voting rights apportioned over size of landowning holding/tenant and commons rights. It is expected that the CIC will have a Directors Board of Ten members and there will be a Stakeholder Engagement Advisory Board (SEAB) of up to 18 members.
- 7.3 DNPA have sought legal advice on the proposed independent CIC, and this has highlighted the need for further detail regarding:
- Potential risks and liabilities for the Authority.
  - How the Authority will be involved in the CIC.
  - Implications for land that we own.
  - How our interests will be protected through the decision-making process of the CIC.
- 7.4 Devon Wildlife Trust have confirmed that this detail, and any subsequent concerns, can be addressed through the rest of the development phase and assurance stage.

## **8 Equality and Sustainability Impact**

- 8.1 The draft EDLRS has engaged a wide range of stakeholders from those directly engaged in the scheme to public, commoners, landowners and residents. The EDLRS includes priorities for habitats and species and follows the Lawton principles of Better, Bigger, More and Joined up.

## **9 Financial Implications**

- 9.1 There are no direct financial commitments in terms of a contribution required or expected from DNPA at delivery (subject to negotiations during the assurance stage). However, there will be an expectation of staff time (with appropriate recompense to be agreed during assurance) and DNPA would be asked to be engaged as a board director on the Independent CIC, subject to that being the confirmed model after assurance. DNPA would also take part in the Stakeholder Engagement advisory Board.
- 9.2 The funding of the scheme will primarily come from Defra. DNPA will have to ensure it is cognisant of the interventions listed in the plan and if DNPA have committed to any, in order to receive Defra funds. There will be potential additional funds secured via Natural Capital (BNG, Carbon and Woodland Code etc) where applicable and via corporate sponsorship. The funds received via corporate sponsorship will follow an ethical framework that would encompass DNPA's requirements. The proportion of total spend that is flagged as coming from blended finance is to be determined during the assurance stage such should be flagged as a risk to the project and to be considered if EDLRS is successful in passing the assurance stage.

## **10 Conclusion**

- 10.1 The EDLRS provides a significant opportunity to improve the condition of nature within the scheme area and to do this in ways which support viable farming systems that help deliver other public benefits (including access, heritage, water and carbon management). The vision, aims and objectives of the EDLRS are compatible with the vision in the current Dartmoor Partnership Plan (National Park Management Plan) and, should the scheme receive funding for delivery, will be an important part of delivering the aims and objectives of the revised Partnership Plan.
- 10.2 Members are being asked to support submission of the EDLRS to Defra for assurance (assessment). This is akin to providing in-principle support. There are detailed questions about the nature of management interventions, impact on commoning, visitor management and overall scheme governance that will need to be answered during the assurance stage. For this reason it is recommended that Members agree to delegate to the National Park Officer (Chief Executive), in consultation with the Chair of the Authority, the power and ability to ask and answer questions during the assurance stage. A further report will be presented to a future Authority meeting seeking agreement to participate in the Landscape Recovery Scheme if the Scheme is offered funding for delivery.

- 10.3 A report will be presented to a future meeting of the Authority seeking agreement on whether to join the EDLRS (should it be successful in securing delivery funding). This staged approach protects the Authority's interests but also signals in principle support for what is an important opportunity to further National Park purposes.

RICHARD DRYSDALE

**Attachments:**    **Appendix 1 - Map of EDLRS including DNPA owned land**  
                         **Appendix 2 - EDLRS Vision t**  
                         **Appendix 3 – Haytor Bagtor Upland Enhancement Plan**  
                         **Appendix 4 – Wilder Woods plan**

20251205 RD EDLRS (East Dartmoor Landscape Recovery Scheme)



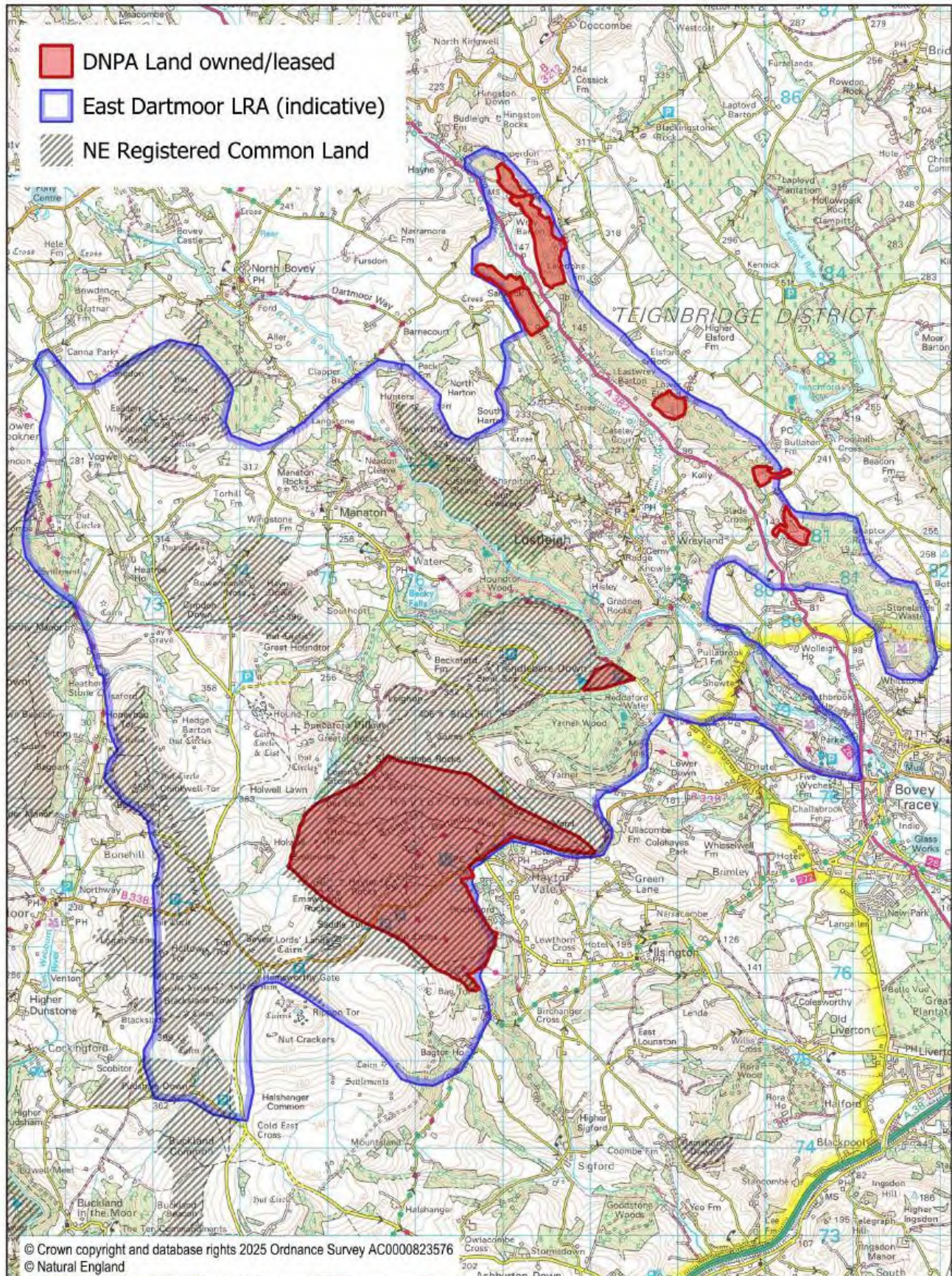
# Dartmoor National Park Authority

DNPA land within East Dartmoor  
Landscape Recovery area

0 1 2 km  
Scale 1:60,000 @ A4



Compiled by gdriver on 25/11/2025





# East Dartmoor Landscape Recovery



**Devon**  
Wildlife Trust



Photo: Shutterstock, Alexey Fedotenko



OXYGEN  
HOUSE





# Vision

East Dartmoor is a special place. Its moors, wooded valleys and upland farms support a vibrant rural economy and provide critical refuge for rare and threatened wildlife. But this landscape is under increasing pressure. Biodiversity loss, climate change, rising visitor numbers and changes to agricultural subsidy mean that rural businesses, and the ecosystems they depend on, face an uncertain future.

Through the East Dartmoor Landscape Recovery Scheme, a local partnership of landowners, farmers and conservation organisations will work together to build ecological and economic resilience, securing the future of this unique landscape. Over the next twenty years, key habitats will be restored and expanded, supporting the recovery of the project's flagship species. Healthy soils and flower-rich grasslands will help to reverse local insect declines, building the foundations for a flourishing food chain. Woodlands will be revitalised, and grazing livestock will create dynamic habitat mosaics, helping biodiversity to flourish. Scattered trees on the commons and in-by farmland will provide shade and shelter. The removal of invasive non-native species will support the recovery of native flora and fauna. Hidden pressures on rivers and streams will be reduced. The landscape will be more connected, teeming with wildlife.

In turn, these changes will provide ecosystem services such as clean air and carbon storage. The landscape will be more resilient to climate change: valley mires, wet woodlands and wet grasslands will hold more water during periods of heavy rainfall, reducing flood risk and providing livestock with

food and water sources during summer droughts. Local businesses will gain security through the greater ecosystem resilience and will receive financial support in return for achieving these long-term environmental outcomes, ultimately strengthening livelihoods.

Improvements to access and engagement, including greater support for knowledge sharing, will enable local communities and visitors to deepen their connection to East Dartmoor's natural and cultural heritage—growing understanding, fostering care and responsibility, and encouraging active contributions to help nature thrive.

To achieve these changes, dedicated advisors will provide support to landowners and managers, working together to implement a realistic, evidence-based plan.

## Flagship Species

15 rare and threatened species have been selected as flagships for the project. These are representative of the range of priority habitats found in East Dartmoor and fluctuations in their populations are good indicators of the health of their preferred habitat. Long-term monitoring of these wildlife populations, alongside the measurement of other environmental metrics, will provide an overview of ecological health in East Dartmoor.

The following pages introduce the project's flagship species and the priority habitats it will focus on.



Photo: Clémence Viel



# Temperate Rainforest

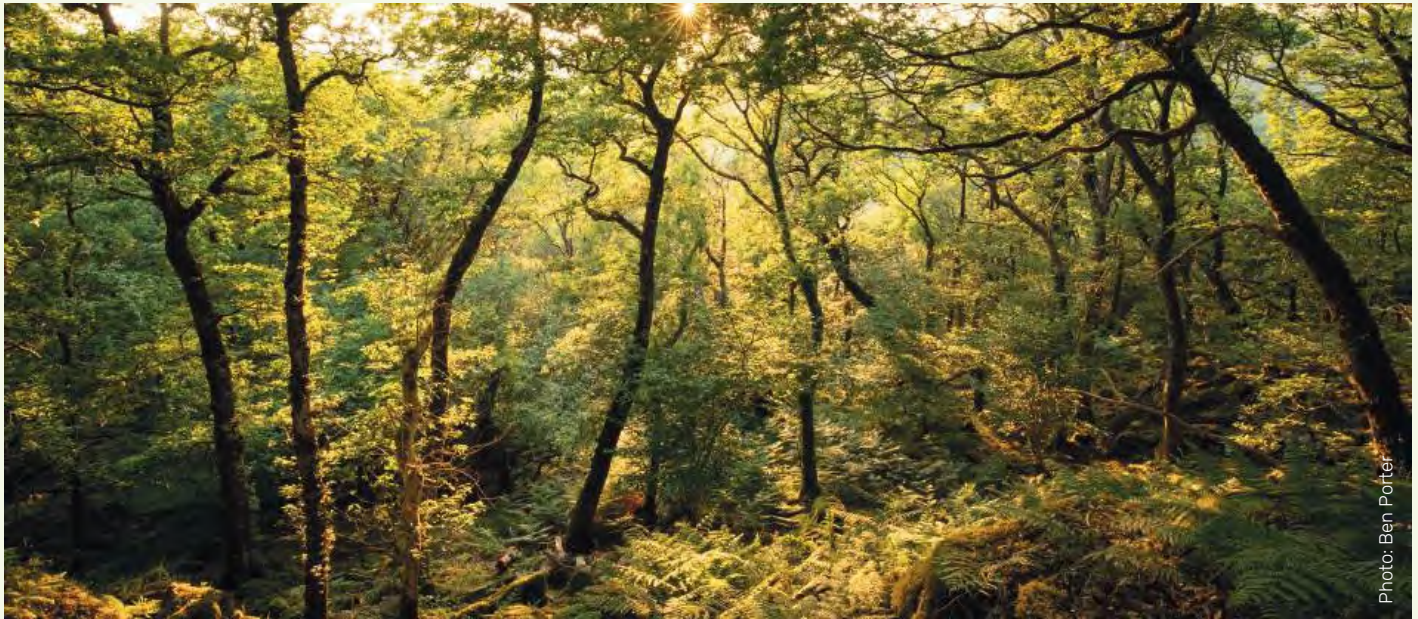


Photo: Ben Porter



Photo: Mark Hamblin

## Pied flycatcher

A species of temperate rainforest, pied flycatchers winter in West Africa, returning to the UK to breed. Although threatened by climate change and loss of habitat (they have declined in the UK by 59% since 1995), targeted management and nest boxes provision mean that this species is currently stable in Dartmoor.



Photo: Michael Symes

## Lesser horseshoe

Reduced prey availability driven by agricultural intensification has led to significant declines in this species over the last century. Lesser horseshoes require a patchwork of grazed pasture and open woodland, connected by hedgerows. Increasing connectivity of suitable habitat, minimising insecticide use and protecting maternity roost sites will all benefit this species.



Photo: Vaughn Matthews

## Blue ground beetle

Thought to be extinct until 1994, this species is the UK largest ground beetle and has only been rediscovered at 15 woodland sites across Devon, Cornwall and South Wales, one of which is in the East Dartmoor. Generally nocturnal, they eat slugs and require plenty of dead wood. They benefit from extensive grazing.



Photo: Stefan Johansson

## Lesser-spotted woodpecker

This species has declined by 81% since 1997. The primary reasons are thought to be the loss of open woodland habitats and competition with an expanding great spotted woodpecker population. Increasing open woodland and deadwood availability are likely to be beneficial.

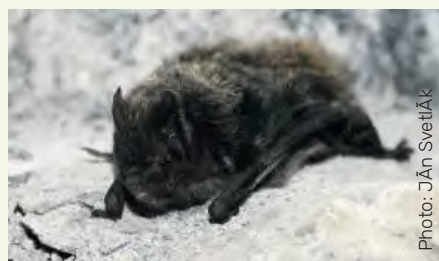


Photo: JĀn SvetĀk

## Barbastelle

The barbastelle bat is classified as at imminent risk of extinction in the UK. The reasons for this decline are uncertain, but may include habitat loss and fragmentation, and a reduction in prey due to increased insecticide use. Primarily a woodland species, this bat will also feed in unimproved grasslands and along river corridors.



Photo: Tom Hibbert

## Lichens, mosses & liverworts

Iconic species of our temperate rainforests, the UK supports c.47% of lichens and 65% of bryophytes found in Europe. They provide microhabitats for invertebrates, store carbon and hold water. They are threatened by loss of habitat, climate change and atmospheric pollution.



# Other Woodland Habitats

## Wet Woodland



## Wood Pasture



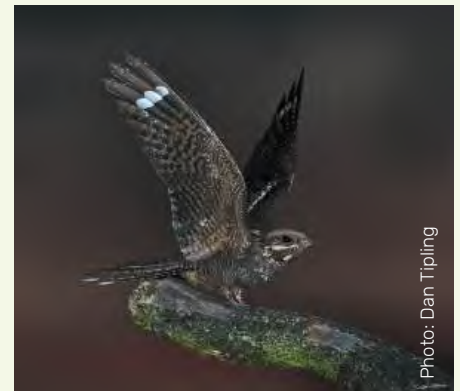
### Willow tit

Willow tits have declined by over 90% in England since 1995 and are considered the UK's fastest declining resident bird species. They are primarily found in wet woodlands. During the breeding season, adults excavate nests in old dead wood. The young only disperse a few kilometres from their nest, meaning they colonise new sites slowly. The major threats in Devon/Dartmoor are habitat fragmentation and a reduction in standing deadwood.



### Cuckoo

Cuckoos have declined by 82% in SW England since 1995. Reasons include declining host species and invertebrate prey abundance, chick predation and migration mortality. Increasing the extent of moorland-scrub mosaic habitats, grazed by cattle and ponies, will benefit this species.



### Nightjar

Nightjars eat insects such as moths, flies and beetles and need open wood-pasture habitats with enough prey. They nest on the ground, so disturbance by people and dogs is an important threat. Increasing the extent of wood pasture and scrub, grazed by cattle and ponies, will benefit this species.



# Grassland & Moorland Habitats

## Species-Rich Grassland



## Moorland



### Greater Horseshoe

This species thrives in a patchwork landscape of unimproved pasture and ancient woodland, connected by hedges and scrub. Increasing connectivity of suitable habitat, minimising insecticide use and protecting maternity roost sites will all benefit this species.



### Pearl-bordered Fritillary

A species of moorland-scrub mosaics, wood pasture and woodland glades, the distribution of the pearl-bordered fritillary has contracted by 88% since 1979, primarily due to habitat loss and population isolation. Naturalistic grazing, woodland coppicing, bracken management and habitat connectivity are important for this species.



### Whinchat

The whinchat has declined by 65% in England since 1995. This is largely the result of declining insect abundance and the loss of complex habitat mosaics on the commons combining bracken, unimproved grassland and open scrub. Increasing the extent and complexity of moorland-scrub mosaic habitats, grazed by cattle and ponies, will benefit this species.



# Wetland & Freshwater Habitats

## Valley Mire and Wet Grasslands



## River



### Curlew

Breeding curlew have been all but lost from Dartmoor. The reasons include in-bye land use change, disturbance and egg/chick predation. Unimproved grassland and mire habitats are key for this species, where soft soils allow the young to feed and open lines of sight reduce predation risk. Increased habitat availability, visitor engagement and reduced risk from predation will be key to recovering this species.



### Marsh fritillary

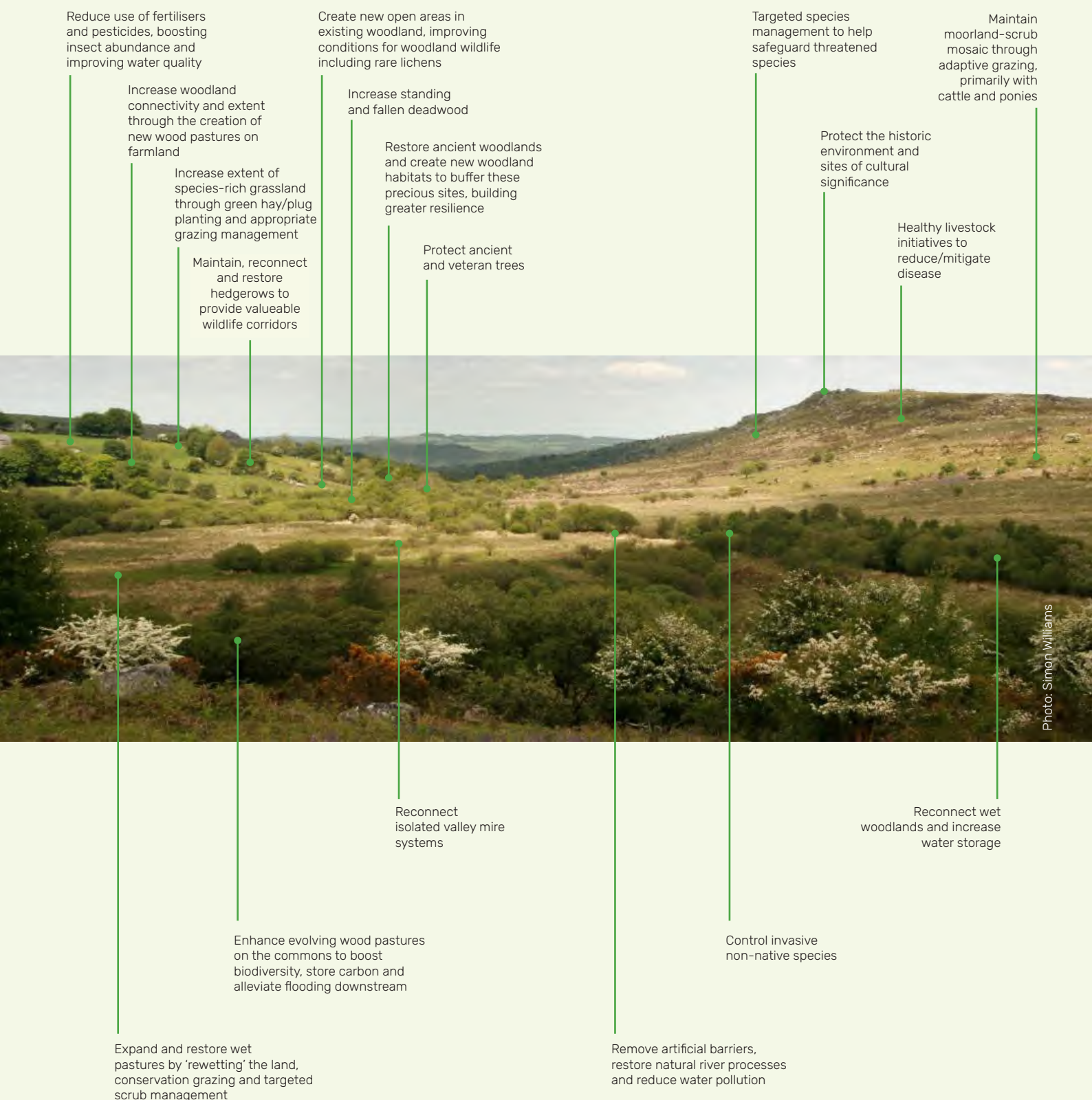
The marsh fritillary can be found in damp moorland and grassland. The caterpillars only food plant is devil's bit scabious, which in East Dartmoor is commonly found in wet grasslands and valley mires. Adults generally only fly 50-100m and dispersal can be prevented by even small barriers. This means that habitat fragmentation prevents the species from colonising new areas. Naturalistic grazing by cattle and ponies, reconnecting isolated valley mire systems and targeted scrub management are all important for supporting the species long-term survival.



### Atlantic salmon

The Atlantic salmon has suffered chronic UK population decline. Removal of barriers to migration, restoration of natural river processes and reducing water pollution will be key if this species is to survive here.

# Proposed management interventions to enhance habitats for the flagship species and other wildlife







**Devon**  
Wildlife Trust

## Contacts

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**Matt Peasgood-Ellis:** EDLRA Advisory Officer

**Clémence Viel:** Project Development and Support Lead

**Emily Cuff:** Nature Recovery Officer (Projects)

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Photo: Amy Lewis



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs



Environment  
Agency



Landscape Recovery is a Defra  
funded scheme delivered/administered  
by Natural England.

## East Dartmoor Landscape Recovery: Upland enhancement plan

**Name:** Haytor and Bagtor Commons

**CL number(s):**

**Number of rights holders:**

**Number of active commoners:**

**Current agri-environment scheme agreement:** Yes/No (if yes complete section below)

**Agreement type:**

**Expiry date:**

**Current grazing calendar:**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sheep												
Cattle (6 mos-2 yrs)												
Cattle (2 yrs+)												
Ponies												

**Designations:** Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI); National Park

### Plan summary:

There are 6 key objectives on Haytor and Bagtor: (1) restoration of a natural upland habitat mosaic underpinned by a naturalistic grazing regime, (2) establishing dynamic management, with regular stock movements and changes in grazing pressure over time, (3) improving habitat for marsh and pearl-bordered fritillaries in sites with existing populations, (4) maintaining and enhancing mire habitat for breeding curlew, (5) restoring features designated under the SSSI to favourable condition and (6) maintenance of access provision as a key visitor hotspot and managing negative impacts of visitor pressure. Initially, work will be required to reduce the dominance of bracken and gorse in some areas. Reduced grazing pressure in some areas of heathland will address fragmentation and improve habitat condition. Regular stock movements and changes in grazing pressure over time will create dynamism and support vegetation regeneration, improving ecosystem health and providing a strong foundation for farm businesses. Targeted management in key areas will enhance habitat conditions for flagship species and protect important historic sites.

### Annual payment summary

Your annual payment for Landscape Recovery is as follows:

Land area in agreement	Average payment/ha	Annual payment
538.33ha	£273.83	£147,410.93 (100% cattle & ponies)
	£258.77	£139,302.51 (90% cattle & ponies)
	£228.64	£123,085.66 (70% cattle & ponies)

## Contents

Plan summary: .....	1
Annual payment summary .....	1
1. Current situation .....	3
2. Principles .....	4
2.1. Overview .....	4
2.2. How the plan has been created .....	4
2.3. Stocking rates .....	5
2.4. Grazing calendar .....	5
2.5. Stocking ratio .....	6
2.6. Stock movements .....	6
2.7. Payment structure .....	6
2.8. Delivering the plan .....	7
2.9. Annual review process .....	8
3. Upland enhancement plan .....	9
3.1. Objectives .....	9
3.2. Overview .....	9
3.3. Year 1 stocking rate .....	9
3.4. Maps .....	10
3.5. Plan schedule .....	15
4. Appendix .....	16
4.1. Habitat descriptions .....	16
4.2. Species management .....	20
4.3. Historic site management .....	20



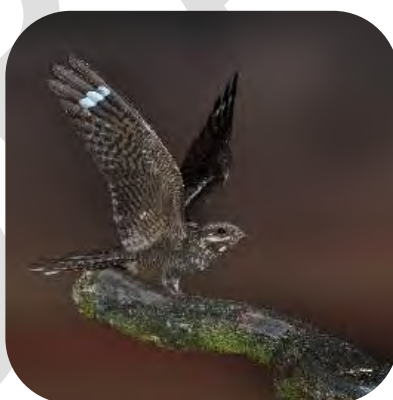
## 1. Current situation

Much of Haytor and Bagtor commons is in good condition, including the heathland to the North and South and a diverse upland mosaic in the Northeast. However, some areas of heathland are currently overgrazed, while in other areas increasing dominance of bracken and gorse is becoming an issue. The commons play a key role in access provision for visitors to East Dartmoor, and significant work has been undertaken to date to facilitate this.

### List of known flagship species:

- Cuckoo
- Nightjar
- Pearl-bordered fritillary
- Marsh fritillary
- Curlew

**Issues/Threats:** High visitor pressure. High localised grazing pressure. Bracken and gorse have become dominant in some areas, reducing habitat condition on the common.



## 2. Principles

### 2.1. Overview

The East Dartmoor Landscape Recovery (EDLR) scheme will focus on restoring a healthy upland mosaic, supporting the recovery of threatened habitats and species. Whilst objectives are similar to previous agri-environment schemes, there are four main differences between this and previous approaches:

1. Increased focus on natural processes
2. Increased control over stock movements
3. Adaptive management to respond to changes and create dynamism in the system
4. Valuing ecosystem services, including biodiversity, flood management and carbon storage.

In practice, this means that (a) there will be more active management of livestock movements required, (b) that the number of animals and grazing period will be adapted over time to achieve the outcomes detailed in the plan (see Principles below for further information) and (c) that the distribution of habitats mapped here may change over time. However, this will be maintained within 20% of the baseline in this plan.

This novel approach, which will evolve over the course of the implementation period, will increase the ecological health of our uplands and provide a strong foundation for farm businesses.

### 2.2. How the plan has been created

We have used a rules-based approach to define outcomes for each upland area. In the first instance we have identified opportunities and constraints which dictate management priorities. These include:

- **Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) designations:** the aim in these areas must be to work towards restoring favourable condition of designated habitats and features.
- **Areas of historic importance:** protecting Dartmoor's historical and cultural heritage is core to the aims of the East Dartmoor Landscape Recovery scheme.
- **Priority areas for flagship species:** targeted management in these areas will not only play a role in protecting threatened species but will also enhance habitat conditions for a suite of upland wildlife.

We have then taken an ecological process-led approach to defining habitat outcomes in other areas. This means establishing a naturalistic grazing regime, identifying areas which would naturally have higher or lower grazing pressure and adjusting management accordingly to restore areas of open and dense wood pasture, open upland mosaics of heathland and acid grassland, and closed-canopy woodland (see Appendix). This will support the recovery of the EDLRA's flagship species (see the EDLRA Vision document for

further information), while at the same time enhancing ecological and climate resilience. The key considerations here are slope and aspect.

Other factors considered include:

- Current canopy cover
- Opportunities for woodland expansion/connectivity
- Ground-truthing.

Finally, discussions with land managers have been key in creating a practical, achievable plan.

This has all been brought together in the map included below. **Please note** that this is still a draft plan, on which we welcome feedback. The current mapping, and proposed payment and stocking rates may change, subject to review by DEFRA.

### *2.3. Stocking rates*

- In year 1 of the LR Agreement, stocking rates will match those in any current agri-environment scheme (AES) agreement. Where an upland area is not currently in any agreement, the stocking rate for the most comparable upland area will be applied.
- Thereafter, stocking rates may go up or down in two circumstances:
  1. Where necessary to achieve planned outcomes
  2. In response to the impact of weather on forage availability.
- The decision to increase or decrease stocking rates will be based on a review of data gathered by the Uplands Facilitator each grazing season. Sign-off will also be required from a grazing panel that includes the Programme Manager and a Natural England grazing specialist.
- Where longer-term changes are needed (for example, a general increase to manage increased forage availability after bracken or gorse clearance), the facilitator will work with the graziers to establish a reasonable timeline, taking into account time required to breed new stock.
- Where shorter-term fluctuations are needed, possible mechanisms could include one or more of the following, depending on your business and situation (note that we welcome input here to ensure any changes are achievable):
  1. Adjusting the number of ponies
  2. Retaining / selling culls
  3. Retaining young stock as fats / selling as stores
  4. Adjusting the grazing season.

### *2.4. Grazing calendar*

The initial grazing calendar will match those in any current AES agreement. Where an upland area is not currently in any agreement, the grazing calendar for the most

comparable upland area will be applied. Where there is a clear ecological rationale and animal welfare can be assured (including breed appropriateness), it may be possible to extend grazing seasons. In this case, the stocking rate would generally be adjusted to achieve the same overall LSUs/year defined in the agreement at the time in question, although there may be exceptions (e.g. to achieve changes in stocking rate as outlined above, or to achieved targeted management, e.g. bracken trampling at key times).

### *2.5. Stocking ratio*

Ecologically, it is desirable for the ratio of livestock to be strongly towards cattle and ponies and away from sheep, as this will create a more varied sward structure, be more effective for controlling bracken, scrub and coarse vegetation, and will increase wildlife diversity. Cattle and ponies must, therefore, account for a minimum of 70% of total livestock units, with payments structured to support higher percentages (see Payment structure below).

### *2.6. Stock movements*

It is expected that all adult cattle will be required to wear a collar with virtual fencing technology. This is to support the habitat outcomes defined in the Upland Enhancement Plan (UEP), through enabling more targeted grazing, while at the same time providing information on animal movements and welfare. Year 1 of the agreement will be a 'training season' to test the collars and train stock to their use. Thereafter, as part of the core grazing payment, all graziers will be expected to use the collars to rotationally graze their livestock according to a grazing plan agreed with the facilitator. Note that where the same outcomes can be achieved through shepherding, this will be considered. Where sheep are being grazed, all ewes will wear GPS collars as a minimum, to provide information on where they are currently grazing. If current grazing patterns are found to be preventing the desired outcomes, virtual-fence technology may be used, or increased shepherding may be required to keep stock to a lea. To reduce the risk of disease transmission and allow targeted grazing, livestock from different herds/flocks will be kept to separate leas and each grazier will follow an individual grazing plan (see below).

### *2.7. Payment structure*

The following components have been valued in the payments:

#### **LR Foundations**

- See LR Foundations document for details.

#### **General moorland management**

- Agreeing and implementing a moorland habitat plan with your facilitator for any cutting or burning of heather, rough grass, bracken, gorse or vaccinium.
- Controlling dense rush so it does not cover more than an agreed area of land.



- **PLEASE NOTE** that separate capital funding will be available in the first five years of the agreement to support additional work required to establish a favourable habitat mosaic.

### **Adaptive grazing**

- Shepherding payment (i.e. using collars with digital fence technology)
- Rotating stock according to grazing plan agreed with the facilitator.
- Adjusting stocking rates in accordance with recommendations from the facilitator.

### **Woodland creation**

- Maintenance of existing woodland or creation of new closed canopy woodland or dense wood pasture, through natural colonisation or planting.

### **Cattle and pony supplement**

- A tiered supplement has been applied where cattle or ponies make up at least 90% and 100% of the total livestock units.

## ***2.8. Delivering the plan***

An Upland Facilitator employed by the Single Legal Entity will work with graziers, the commoners' association and landowners to achieve the outcomes detailed in the Upland Enhancement Plan.

This will be a close and collaborative partnership which will help to safeguard desired outcomes, promote knowledge exchange and enable adaptive management of the land.

Working with the land managers, the Upland Facilitator will create an implementation plan for each upland area, and will provide support in implementing it.

This plan will include:

- A grazing plan per grazier
  - The grazing 'paddocks'
  - A rotational grazing plan
  - The annual grazing calendar
- Vegetation management plan (creating the mosaic)
  - Scrub clearance
  - Bracken management
  - Prescriptive burning
- Invasive species management plan
  - Invasive non-native species, e.g. rhododendron
  - Deer management
- Integrated fire management plan
  - Fire response planning

- Firebreaks
- Access and species management.

### *2.9. Annual review process*

To review progress towards the stated outcomes, stocking rates/calendars, and enable adaptive management, the following annual meetings will be held.

- Quarterly meetings with facilitator (minimum chair and secretary, open to all active graziers), including an annual review (all active graziers).
- One knowledge exchange field visit per year.
- Attendance at the annual review and knowledge exchange event will be paid in arrears in addition to the revenue payment.

DRAFT

### 3. Upland enhancement plan

#### 3.1. Objectives

Through the EDLR scheme, the aim is to restore a favourable habitat mosaic on Haytor and Bagtor, enhancing the conditions for target species. There are 6 main objectives:

1. Restoration of a natural upland habitat mosaic underpinned by a naturalistic grazing regime.
2. Establishing dynamic management, with regular stock movements and changes in grazing pressure over time.
3. Improving habitat for marsh and pearl-bordered fritillaries in sites with existing populations.
4. Maintaining and enhancing mire habitat for breeding curlew.
5. Restoring features designated under the SSSI to favourable condition.
6. Maintenance of access provision and managing negative impacts of visitor pressure.

#### 3.2. Overview

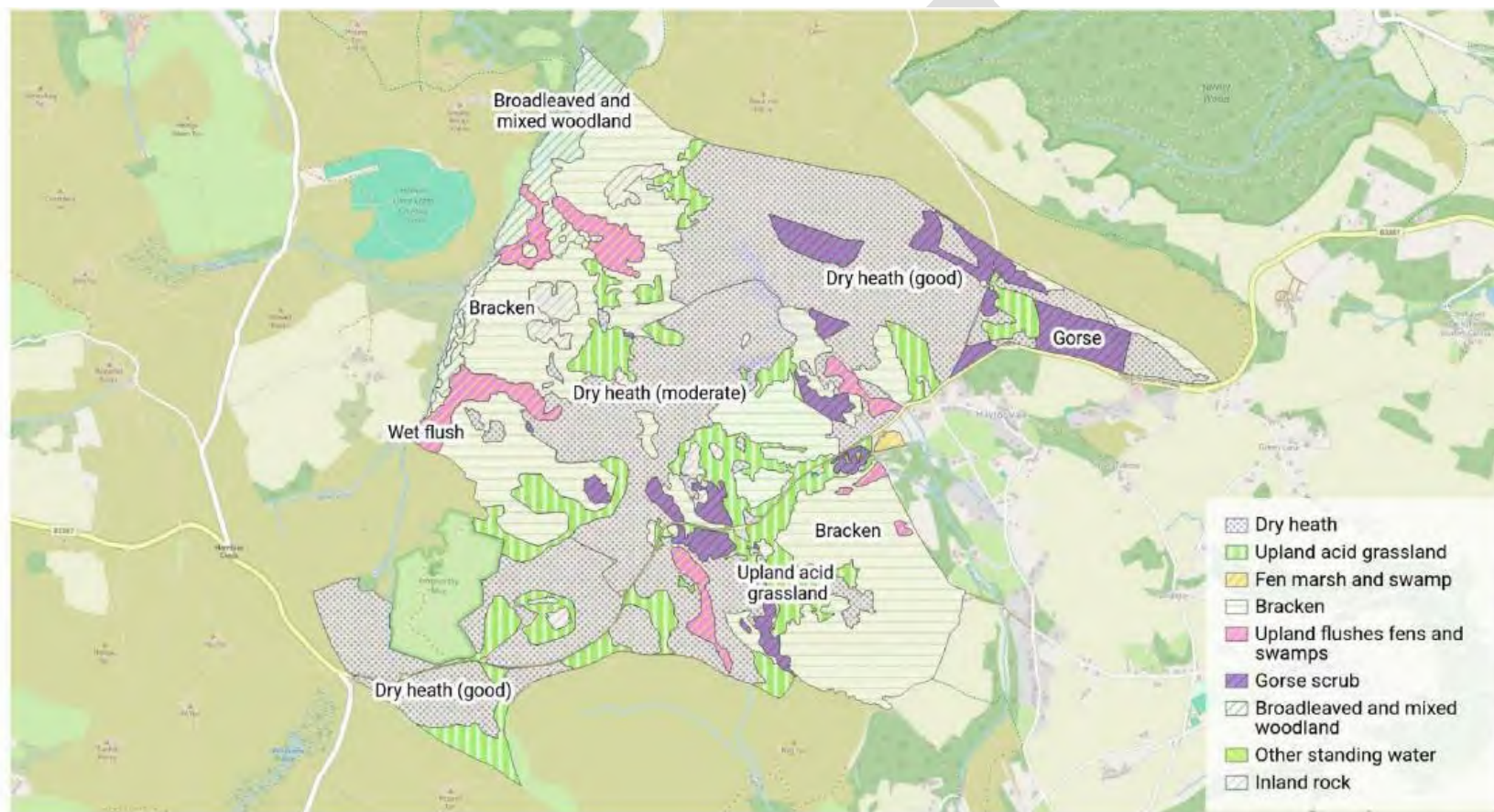
Across the central plateau, adaptive grazing will maintain and restore an open upland mosaic (see Appendix) including lowland heath, acid grassland and scattered trees. This will provide favourable habitat for cuckoo, nightjar, whinchat and other important species. The condition of the SSSI in this area of the common will also be improved. Across the steep slopes in the North-East of the common, the focus will be on maintaining a diverse habitat mosaic including wood pasture (see Appendix), upland flushes and mires (key curlew breeding habitat) and woodland, and enhancing conditions for existing populations of both marsh and pearl-bordered fritillaries (see Appendix). In two areas in the West of Haytor common, wood pasture will be allowed to establish and targeted management will enhance conditions for pearl-bordered fritillaries. Across both commons, targeted grazing will enhance and protect historic sites (see Appendix). The implementation of an integrated fire management plan will mitigate fire risk, while access provision will be maintained and extended.

#### 3.3. Year 1 stocking rate

LSU/ha, as per current agreement (not yet shared). Subject to change thereafter, as outlined above.

### 3.4. Maps

#### 3.4.1. Haytor and Bagtor: UKHab habitat condition assessment



Produced on Land App, Nov 13, 2025.  
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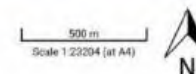
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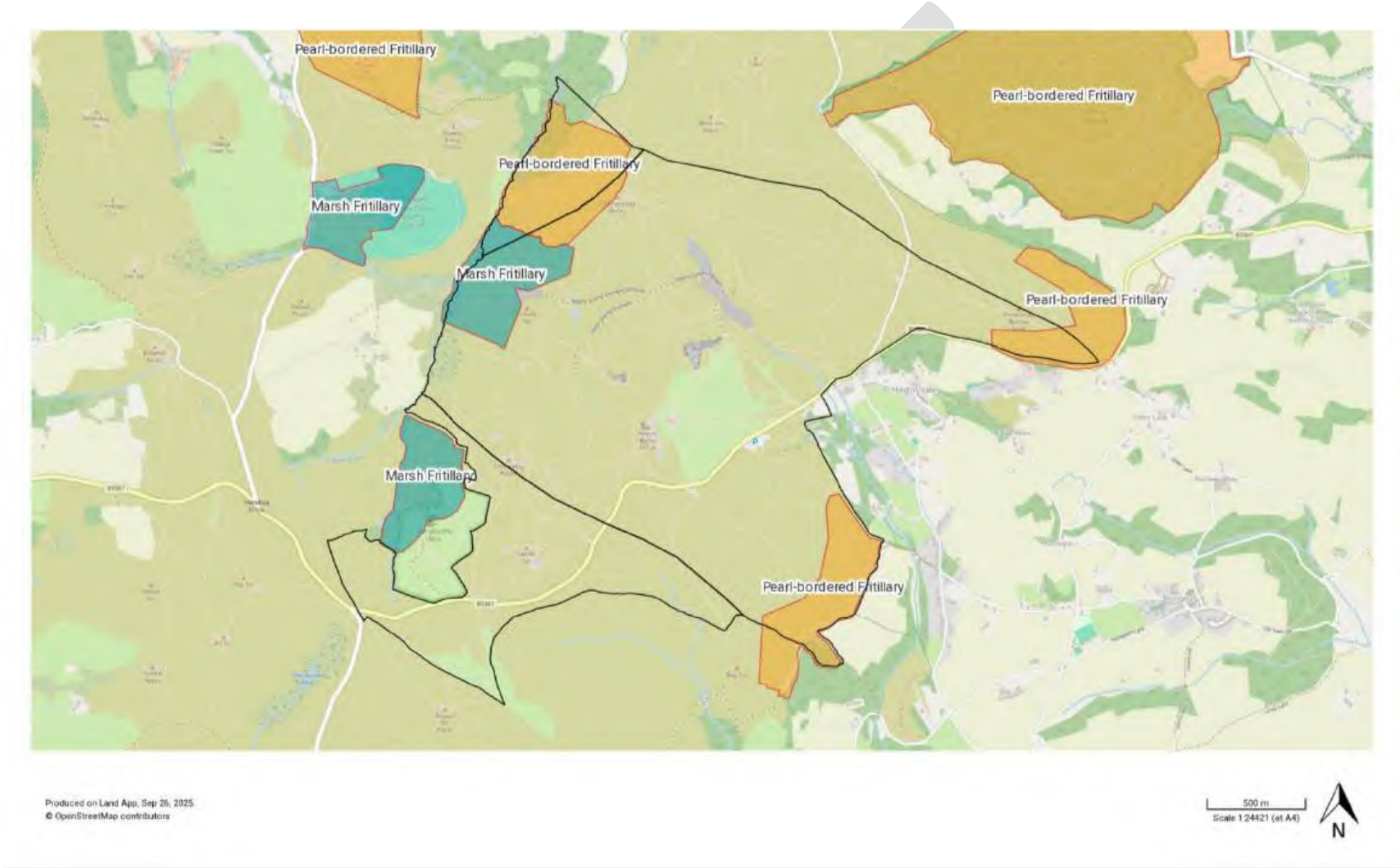
### 3.4.2. Haytor and Bagtor: historic sites



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3.4.3. Haytor and Bagtor: flagship species (butterflies)



#### 3.4.4. Haytor and Bagtor: flagship species (birds)

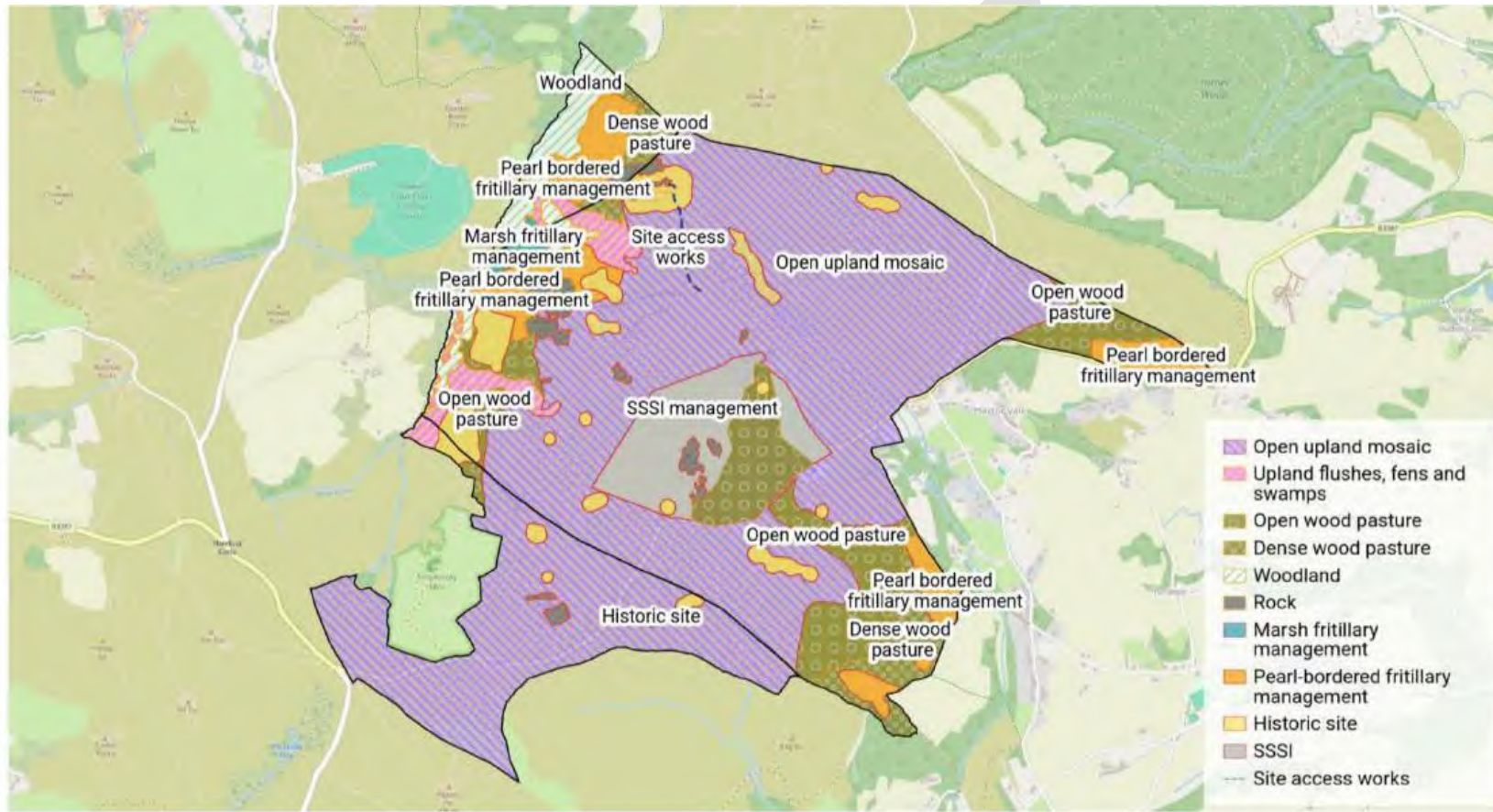


Produced on Land App, Nov 13, 2025.  
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### 3.4.5. Haytor and Bagtor: Upland Enhancement Plan (habitat outcomes)



Produced on Land App, Nov 14, 2025.  
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### *3.5. Plan schedule*

#### **Preparation and restoration phase**

- Year 1:
  - Create and refine the grazing plan
  - Train livestock to the collars and trial their use. Information from this first year will be used to refine the grazing plan going forwards
  - Establish necessary infrastructure (e.g. water supply).
- Years 1-5:
  - Mechanical interventions and prescriptive burning to restore a favourable habitat mosaic as detailed in the UEP.

#### **Implementation phase**

- Year 6 onwards:
  - Implementation of the adaptive grazing plan. Throughout this period, grazing will be the primary tool, with mechanical intervention and controlled burning used where necessary, to achieve the objectives detailed in the UEP.

## 4. Appendix

### 4.1. Habitat descriptions

#### *Open upland mosaic*

This habitat type will consist of heathland and acid grassland with scattered trees (<10%) and will be primarily located on level and high ground.

“Areas of heathland in good condition should consist of an ericaceous layer of varying heights and structures, plus some or all of the following additional features, depending on environmental and/or management conditions: scattered and clumped trees and scrub; bracken; areas of bare ground and acid grassland; lichens; gorse; wet heaths, bogs and open waters (UK Biodiversity Action Plan).”





### *Open wood pasture*

Primarily an open habitat of heathland and acid grassland, open wood pasture will generally be located in areas with a moderately steep slope or around the moorland fringe. Reduced grazing pressure will allow open grown scrub to cover 10% to 30% of the area, with scattered trees such as oak, rowan and birch providing additional food sources for wildlife.



### *Dense wood pasture*

Primarily located in areas with a steep slope or around the moorland fringe. Reduced grazing pressure will allow open grown scrub to cover 31-70% of the area, with scattered trees such as oak, rowan and birch providing additional food sources for wildlife. Vegetation beneath this will be heathland and acid grassland.





### *Woodland*

Woodland expansion will primarily be targeted in very steep areas, and/or adjacent to existing priority woodland. Very low grazing in these areas will enable the habitat to transition from scrub to upland birch woods (20-50 years), eventually becoming upland oak woodland in 50+ years. Canopy cover will be greater than 70%.



## 4.2. Species management

### *Pearl-bordered fritillary management*

A species of moorland-scrub mosaics, wood pasture and woodland glades, the distribution of the pearl-bordered fritillary has contracted by 88% since 1979, primarily due to habitat loss and population isolation. Eggs are laid on bracken or leaf litter close to violets, the caterpillars' only food plant. Naturalistic grazing, woodland coppicing, bracken management and habitat connectivity are important for this species. Further information can be found [here](#).



### *Marsh fritillary management*

The marsh fritillary can be found in damp moorland and grassland. The caterpillars only food plant is devil's bit scabious, which in East Dartmoor is commonly found in rhos pastures and valley mires. Adults generally only fly 50-100m and dispersal can be prevented by even small barriers. This means that habitat fragmentation prevents the species from colonising new areas. Naturalistic grazing by cattle and ponies, reconnecting isolated valley mire systems and targeted scrub management are all important for supporting the species long-term survival. Further information can be found [here](#).

## 4.3. Historic site management

Vegetation and grazing management in accordance with support from DNPA archaeologists to protect and restore historic features.

## Wilder Woods

You must strive to improve the ecological condition of any woodland on your holding. Through active management the project aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Condition of existing woodland improved
- Temporary and permanent open space increased
- Deadwood volume increased (both fallen and standing)
- Age and height range of trees increased
- Diversity of ground flora increased
- Tree and shrub species richness increased
- Increased recruitment of young trees
- Tree cavities increased

Managing your woodland in a sustainable way can make your wood more resilient to climate change, and the threat of pests and diseases, as well as helping to improve biodiversity, carbon capture and timber production. Woodlands will be managed to help support threatened species, meet your woodland objectives, and maximise the provision of public goods.

A key outcome will be to increase light levels in these woodland areas through management practices such as thinning, coppicing, pollarding, and creating glades. These techniques aim to open up the canopy, allowing more sunlight to reach the forest floor and stimulate the growth of diverse plant and animal life. Enrichment planting might be required in some areas to increase the number of native tree species. These changes will improve the health and resilience of your woodland, enhancing its value for woodland wildlife.

Specific management actions will be outlined within your woodland management plan to help achieve these aims. At the start of project implementation, you will support the Woodland Facilitator to produce a detailed 5-year plan for your woodland. Progress against this plan will be reviewed at regular intervals, with new management plans produced every 5 years throughout your 20-year agreement. With the support of advisors and project staff you will ensure delivery of your bespoke woodland management plan and ensure the following criteria are met:

- **Your woodland will be actively managed to promote greater biodiversity.**
- **You have a Forestry Commission approved Woodland Management Plan (WMP) in place for the duration of the Landscape Recovery scheme.**
- **Your woodland contains a minimum of 10% open habitat (permanent and temporary open space). \***



- **Any mature woodland must meet or exceed a target of 100m<sup>3</sup> of deadwood habitat per hectare by the end of the agreement. \*\***
- **A complex woodland structure has been established and natural regeneration encouraged by selective felling. To improve species composition, by year 5, a minimum of 5 native tree species will be found within each woodland management unit. \*\*\***
- **All management activities adhere to relevant regulations and standards, including the UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) and Felling Licenses requirements.**

\* Open habitat targets should be met by the date agreed within your WMP, and this threshold then sustained for the remainder of the project. Woodlands working towards a more ambitious target of 20% open habitat (minimum 5% permanent) during the project implementation phase will be financially rewarded through a payment by results (PBR) approach (25% uplift on the Wilder Woods annual revenue payment).

\*\* Deadwood targets include both fallen (limbs/trees) and standing (snags) deadwood habitat. The route to achieving this target will be agreed with an advisor and work phased across the 20-year project implementation phase. It is anticipated that woodlands will meet the following milestones: 20m<sup>3</sup> by year 3, 50m<sup>3</sup> by year 10, then 100m<sup>3</sup> by year 20. A lower target of 50 m<sup>3</sup> per hectare will apply to woodland management units where commercial forestry practice is making a significant contribution to timber production and net zero targets, or areas where ancient woodland is being restored from conifer plantations (PAWs).

\*\*\* To meet these criteria within a managed conifer plantation would require a Continuous Cover Forestry (CCF) approach where the objective is to increase species composition and restructure the woodland compartment to a complex structure (three or more canopy layers of trees). Where this is not practically achievable or desirable for the forestry enterprise an exception can be made for these two criteria (species composition and woodland structure), however the annual revenue payments for such areas will be lowered to reflect the diminished impact on woodland resilience and nature recovery. Enrichment tree planting may be required to increase the number of tree species.

#### **Wilder Woods – indicative annual revenue payment\***

Native Broadleaf	<b>£533 per hectare</b>
Continuous Cover Forestry:	<b>£533 per hectare</b>
Conifer plantation:	<b>£301 per hectare</b>

\* Please note this is subject to change





NPA/25/040

## Dartmoor National Park Authority

Friday 5 December 2025

### Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) Programme Update

Report of the Recreation Strategy Development Officer and Farming in Protected Landscapes Manager.

Recommendation: **That Members note the contents of this report.**

#### 1 Background

- 1.1 Authority report NPA/21/019 provided background details on how the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme was developed, the national objectives and how it links to the Dartmoor National Park Partnership Plan. Report NPA/24/045 provided a comprehensive update on programme delivery from years 1-4.
- 1.2 As identified in previous reports, the FiPL programme is a part of Defra's (Department for the Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs) [Agricultural Transition Plan](#). Through the programme Protected Landscapes (PLs) offer funding to farmers and land managers in PLs that:
  - Support nature recovery
  - Mitigate the impacts of climate change
  - Provide opportunities for people to discover, enjoy and understand the landscape and its cultural heritage
  - Protect or improve the quality and character of the landscape or place.
- 1.3 The programme is not an agri-environment scheme, but a flexible, applicant led, competitive local grant programme.
- 1.4 The programme launched at the start of July 2021 and was originally intended to run until the end of March 2024, two subsequent one-year extensions have been provided largely due to the success of the programme with an overwhelmingly positive response from the farming community, protected landscape teams and Defra officials.
- 1.5 The current one-year extension terminates on 31 March 2026 by which point all funded projects must be completed. Defra are yet to confirm the future of the FiPL programme. We understand that decision regarding a further extension is unlikely to be announced until early 2026.

- 1.6 In the past, protected landscapes were given an opportunity to bid for underspend from other protected landscapes. The Dartmoor FiPL team were successful in obtaining additional funds through this mechanism in previous years; however, Defra have indicated that this opportunity is unlikely to be made available in 2025/26 due to spending pressures within the department.
- 1.7 To date, the team have received 383 Expressions of Interest, 98 of which have been submitted since April 2025.

## **2 Year 5 Programme Summary**

- 2.1 For year 5 of the FiPL programme (2025-26) Dartmoor National Park Authority were allocated £759,413 for project delivery (grant funding).
- 2.2 As of 24 November 2025, the budget is as follows:
- Allocated £572,483.20 (75% of budget) across 35 projects.
  - Pipeline and reserve list includes projects nearing final submission and grant agreements. The 26 projects currently represent a grant value of £231,780 (31% of budget). This represents an over allocation of 6%. While this is an overcommitment of budget, the team are managing pipeline applications with some held in reserve in case of underspend from previously allocated projects funds.
  - Project spend (amount claimed against agreements) totals £101,148.25 (18% of the allocated budget and 14% of the total budget).
- 2.3 In 2025-26 four Local Assessment Panel sessions have so far been held with 12 projects presented to panel, all of which were conditionally approved.
- 2.4 In 2025-26 the programme has so far supported 13 first time applicants with others in the pipeline.
- 2.5 FiPL has funded projects across the themes of water management, nature recovery, access improvements, trial of an improved SSSI monitoring system, wildfire management, farm education visits, innovative use of Dartmoor White-faced sheep wool and a project aiming to establish a Bovine Tuberculosis TB support group for Dartmoor farmers whose farms have been impacted by TB. Read [Year 5 project summaries here](#).

## **3 Challenges**

- 3.1 The FiPL team structure changed between years 4 and 5 of the programme with two experienced advisors departing the organisation. Though the loss of experience raised some initial concerns, existing team members should be commended for their attitude and adaptability in taking on new advisory roles within the team. Support from the Hill Farm Project Farming Support Officer has also been invaluable.
- 3.2 Though one-year extensions to the FiPL programme have been welcomed by land managers and protected landscape teams, continuation of one year-extensions with the restricted timeframe of one year to deliver prevents the development of more substantial and impactful projects through multi-year agreements.

- 3.3 The success of FiPL means certain capital items have now been adopted through Countryside Stewardship schemes. This means these items subsequently were ineligible through FiPL without significant justification. Reducing the offer means fewer applicants may look to FiPL should a further extension be decided.
- 3.4 As with previous years, the risk presented by late notification of project underspend is significant and magnified when operating within a one-year delivery cycle. The team is working pro-actively to manage this situation and reduce the risk of returning any underspent funds to Defra. This is being managed through more frequent liaison with grant recipients to ensure any project underspend is identified at the earliest possible stage and made available for re-allocation.

## **4 Conclusion**

- 4.1 The team are on track to deliver the budget by the end of March 2026 subject to spend by the grant recipients. Spend is being closely monitored by the FiPL Team.
- 4.2 The Local Assessment Panel are now well-established and provide valuable scrutiny, insight and advice on project applications.
- 4.3 FiPL continues to be a well-received programme by the farming community. In-particular support from advisors and officers is complimented and identified as a key enabler of access to funding that might otherwise be inaccessible to many of Dartmoor's farmers.
- 4.4 It is recommended that Members note the contents of this report.

JAMES WRIGHT



NPA/25/041

# **Dartmoor National Park Authority**

5 December 2025

## **Visitor Engagement - End of Season Report 2025**

Report of the Director of Conservation and Communities

Recommendation: **That Members note the content of the report.**

### **1 Background**

- 1.1 Summer 2025 was a very busy summer with both the prolonged dry and fine weather at the start of the summer alongside the ruling from the Supreme Court that people had a legal right to backpack camp in certain areas on Dartmoor. As in previous years, the professionalism and hard work by all of those involved in visitor engagement and management was of a consistently high standard and highlighted the power of working in partnership on, across and outside of Dartmoor.

### **2 2025 Visitor Season**

- 2.1 The core of our visitor engagement work continued to use three key themes.
- Communicating key messages
  - Providing a warm welcome
  - Limiting damaging activity
- 2.2 This was especially important this year due to the Supreme Court ruling and the expectation this raised from visitors and also scrutiny from those who live, work and own land on Dartmoor. The ruling demanded sustained outreach throughout the summer to educate and inform. A co-ordinated approach integrated on-the-ground presence through Rangers, Marshals, Voluntary Wardens, Engagement Rangers, Visitor Centre staff and Outreach and Engagement staff with press and publicity, website and social media.
- 2.3 This approach allowed us to engage visitors and influence people's decisions and behaviour throughout their planning and visit. Key to this is understanding the visitor journey so that everybody can enjoy Dartmoor but in ways, and at times and locations that do not cause harm to the special qualities of the National Park or to local communities and crucially to support local businesses.



### 3 Communication and Key Messages

- 3.1 Our mission is to deliver excellent communications which support National Park Purposes and promote Dartmoor's Special Qualities (as identified in the Dartmoor Partnership Plan). Communication is key because it builds trust, highlights the impact of our work and helps people clearly see the difference the Authority is making.
- 3.2 The involvement and collaboration of all DNPA colleagues is crucial to the successful delivery of our key messages. In 2025, we continued to use a flexible communications and marketing mix to reach the right audiences in the right place at the right time and with quality information they need. By applying different approaches – public relations, email marketing, social media, website information, print promotion (flyers, posters, gateway signs, Enjoy Dartmoor), face to face, education events, family activities – we see more positive results. We have used this approach to reiterate and positively reinforce key messages with particular focus on high pressure issues such as dogs on leads, wildfires and backpack camping.
- 3.3 On 21 May 2025, the Supreme Court Judgment (Darwall v Dartmoor National Park Authority) unanimously upheld the right to backpack camp on some of Dartmoor's commons. Media interest was high: our press release responding to the Judgment is the Authority's top news item this year to date. The judgment was extensively covered by national media outlets including the BBC, ITV, Sky News, Guardian, The Times, Independent and Daily Mail.
- 3.4 The DNPA website was updated with direct links from the homepage to the camping map, improving access to essential guidance. All information was checked and updated throughout the website to ensure clarity for those hoping to backpack camp on Dartmoor. Alongside the website, social media was used dynamically in pre-planned communications and reactive communications guided by on the ground input from the Ranger team.
- 3.5 Social media is a key communication platform for DNPA and provides positive contributions in delivering DNPA's messaging. It plays an important role in engaging with residents, visitors, communities, partners, farmers, and landowners. DNPA channels continue to expand in reach and engagement delivering a proactive digital communications strategy shaped by 2024 learnings and insights from Rangers and frontline staff.
  - 3.5.1 **Key messaging:** Our digital communications took a strategic proactive focus, and messaging was tailored around priority topics including camping, dogs on leads, and fire safety, As well as seasonal themes such as weather, parking and cattle safety. Behaviour impact was the forefront of our digital communications using positive phrasing to highlight how a change in behaviour is beneficial to visitors.
  - 3.5.2 **Ray Mears interview:** The communications team interviewed Ten Tors ambassador Ray Mears in May 2025 to explore his passion for Dartmoor, the benefits of outdoor experiences for young people and his inspirations. He provided a fantastic endorsement of 'Dartmoor is my favourite National Park in Britain'. Ten

Tors also provided the opportunity to interview Assistant Director to Ten Tors Colonel John Cummings who gave his top tips for completing Ten Tors.

### 3.5.3 **Wildfire:** The wildfire at Cut Hill in May 2025 saw DNPA's Communications provide 24/7

updates across DNPA channels to keep the public informed, support safety messaging, and advise people to avoid the area. Fire pits and BBQs continued to cause damage throughout a dry summer. To address this, the team delivered targeted educational content emphasising the importance of not having fires.

### 3.5.4 **Princetown closure:** On 31 October 2025 Princetown Visitor Centre closed for the last time. Due to the sensitivity of the event digital communications were carefully managed. To support staff and visitors, DNPA scaled back usual content for the week and paused posts typically scheduled this time of year. Responses were largely positive with many people sharing memories of time spent at the centre.

### 3.6 The importance of social media has been emphasised and the top performing posts and pages between 01 April 2025 and 31 October 2025 were:

#### Facebook:

	Post:	Views:	Reach:	Interactions	Notes:
1	<a href="#">Wildfire:</a>	763,430	539,418	2,455	Post in response to wildfire
2	<a href="#">Camping</a>	86,990	35,783	977	Post in response to camping litter
3	<a href="#">Dogs on leads:</a> <a href="#">Adders</a>	184,200	138,463	1,041	Dogs on leads. Keeping safe due to adders.

#### Instagram:

	Post:	Views:	Reach:	Interactions	Notes:
1	<a href="#">Backpack camping</a>	31,599	22,806	1,947	Backpack camping ruling win.
2	<a href="#">Backpack camping</a>	18,024	14,262	934	Result will be issued today
3	<a href="#">Engaging post</a>	24,973	14,312	835	1 view that takes your breath away

#### LinkedIn:

	Post:	Impressions:	Reach:	Engagements	Notes:
1	<a href="#">Fires</a>	5384	2968	2155	Repairing fire pit damage
2	<a href="#">Camping</a>	1757	1153	931	How to backpack camp
3	<a href="#">Wildfire</a>	4166	2356	917	Post in response to wildfire

#### TikTok:

	Post:	Views:	Likes:	Comments:	Notes:
1	<a href="#">Ten Tors</a>	35687	904	56	John Cummings
2	<a href="#">Ray Mears</a>	13128	319	16	5 questions with Ray Mears
3	<a href="#">Rain</a>	1459	132	4	Listen to the rain

**Website:**

	Page	Views:	Active users
1	<a href="#">Camping map</a>	108,835	54,497
2	<a href="#">Home</a>	100,799	64,254
3	<a href="#">Walking routes</a>	41,131	23,898

- 3.7 Dartmoor National Park Partnership Plan. Ongoing through 2025 and into 2026 is building on the substantial proactive communications work already undertaken. The collaborative effort on this essential long-term strategy has enhanced stakeholder relations and the [public opinion survey](#) reinforced this success.
- 3.8 Commercial Filming. 2025 saw an increase post-pandemic of requests for commercial filming on Dartmoor with at least three major productions being shot on Dartmoor over the summer and autumn. The communications team are the first port of call for filming requests and work to ensure that the filming is meeting the conditions required, is not counter to national park purposes and if appropriate then DNPA land is utilised. Fees are chargeable with additional charges for staff expertise and site monitoring. Commercial fees for locations outside of DNPA's ownership are the responsibility of the relevant landowner.

## 4 Providing a warm welcome

### 4.1 Access for All

- 4.1.1 The 2025 DEFRA provide funding of £122,858, to deliver their programme titled 'Access for All – Removing Barriers in Protected Landscapes'. This funding has secured a second Trampler to be hosted at Postbridge Visitor Centre after the success of the first Trampler launched this summer, which saw a total of 44 hires between 18 June and 1 October 2025. Visitor Centre staff have been instrumental in the implementation of the Trampler, which is part of the Countryside Mobility scheme and invites a donation of £5 to the Authority in providing the service. The DEFRA funding has also enabled surfacing improvements on a badly eroded section of the Lych Way through Bellever Forest, creating a smoother, more water-resistant trail. The funding has created an extension to the Miles Without Stiles route at Fingle Bridge in addition to accessible picnic tables on the Miles Without Stiles routes at Shipley Bridge and Burrator Arboretum. Additional Miles Without Stiles routes will be added to the National Park website and walking app over the winter – [www.dartmoor.gov.uk/enjoy-dartmoor/outdoor-activities/accessible-dartmoor](http://www.dartmoor.gov.uk/enjoy-dartmoor/outdoor-activities/accessible-dartmoor).
- 4.1.2 The Two Moors Way is one of Dartmoor's main promoted long-distance walking routes. The Access and Ranger teams have completed an audit of the entire route which has identified 115 interventions relating to waymarking, surface improvements and accessible infrastructure (stiles to gates) work. Of these 115, 38 are waymarking improvements which are a priority for upgrading by 29<sup>th</sup> May 2026, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Two Moors Way. The Authority is supporting the Two Moors Way Association in leading guided walks and events to commemorate the anniversary in 2026 across May and June.

- 4.1.3 We are hugely indebted to the continued input from volunteers on waymarking production and installation, which focusses on waymark production (and bespoke signs) being made in-house. These works bring a significant cost benefit to the Authority as well as helping all users on the ground by providing destinations and distances on fingerposts. This will run alongside an updated Signage and Waymarking Policy for Spring 2026. In addition, the Dartmoor Local Access Forum have a Signage Working Group who have produced a detailed summary or proposals addressing relevance, design and consistency of waymarking in the National Park. This document will be used to help inform the signage policy review.
- 4.1.4 Active Travel England funding was used to produce an Active Travel plan for Dartmoor. The report highlighted nine key recommendations including a multi-use link between Yelverton and Burrator, improvements to the Princetown Railway walking and cycling route, upgrades along the Two Moors Way and the Templer Way. Officers are now working towards a further funding application to Active Travel England aimed at progressing two schemes to the next stage towards delivery.
- 4.1.5 Over summer the Authority ran a campervan ‘stay the night’ scheme in the Coach Car Park behind Haytor Visitor Centre. This pilot scheme was trialed to provide a place off the Dartmoor Commons for up to three self-contained campervans to pitch up overnight between the hours of 6pm and 9am. Three areas within the Coach Car Park were marked with wooden posts to delineate the spaces for the campervans, and the pilot scheme was successful with positive feedback from users. The intention is to roll out the scheme next year with a formal charge, and to explore the opportunity for other Authority-owned or -leased car parks.

## 4.2 Visitor Centres

- 4.2.1 Visitor figures to the three Centres has been on a par with 2025, with just under 120,000 people being welcomed between April and the end of October. There has been an increase in international visitors, particularly European, and National Park Visitor Centre Princetown also saw increased visits in October with people coming to ‘say goodbye’ as the Centre closed its doors on 31 October 2025.
- 4.2.2 Princetown Visitor Centre held three exhibitions throughout 2025:

### **Rock Idols: the secret lives of Dartmoor’s tors** 1 April – 15 June

The exhibition contained all the artwork from a new book, also called [Rock Idols](#), which is a co-production between Alex and his writer wife [Sophie Pierce](#). From the extraordinary Victorian staircase up Blackingstone Rock to the monumental granite columns of Fur Tor, the Queen of the Moor, the tors are depicted in all their wonder and variety.

Visitor numbers 11,922

### **Dartmoor in the 1920’s** 16 June – 27 July

A collaboration between the Devon History Society and the Dartmoor Trust, the exhibition formed part of the [Devon in the 1920s Festival](#) which gave people the chance to imagine what life was like in their communities a century ago. The exhibition told the story of Dartmoor life and its Devon context through photographic displays and a collection of items.

Visitor numbers 7,067



### **Dartmoor Calendar exhibition 29 July – 31 October**

An exhibition featuring the 12 photos used in the official 2026 DNP calendar along with 20 other photos all of which were taken by staff and reflect their passion for Dartmoor and all its special qualities. This has proved to be one of the biggest income generating items of the year (see 4.4.1)

Visitor numbers 15,303

4.2.3 The visitor centres also hosted a number of activities, events and self-guided sessions which were aimed to welcome new visitors and help existing visitors to deepen their connection with Dartmoor's special qualities.<sup>2</sup> This included:

- Self-guided 'egg-venture' trails from Haytor and Postbridge looking for the first signs of Spring.
- River dipping events at Postbridge during May ½ term
- The summer holidays saw a range of Bog related activities across all three centres including making your own Boggart peg doll, colouring, a trail around the centres and a bog and moorland plant ID challenge. This activity theme was also reflected in our outreach work making dragonflies. These activities helped to support and complement our partnership working with the Peat Fest Southwest project.
- Haytor hosted the successful Big day of Mini Adventures, the launch event of the Dartmoor Outdoors Festival, giving the public the opportunity to learn new skills, think about how to enjoy the countryside in a safe and responsible way and challenge themselves to pack the right things in their backpack for an outdoor adventure or to see if they could put up a backpack tent in the manufacturers recommended time!
- Spooky spiders came out in the Autumn half term with a range of activities and spider facts.

4.2.4 At the end of September, DNPA received news that the National Park Visitor Centres at Postbridge and Haytor had received nominations in the Visit Devon Awards. These will be presented at the end of November.

## **4.3 Retail**

4.3.1 Whilst the overall visitor footfall was down by eight percent the retail sales in the Visitor Centres stayed the same and average transactional value increased by four percent. There has been a particular focus on items that provide a greater 'profit margin' (e.g. the Dartmoor calendar) as income from retail sales helps support provision of the visitor centre offer.

4.3.2 The development of a new website for the Authority will provide the basis for a new online sales capacity in 2026/27.

## **4.4 Outreach and Engagement**

4.4.1 The visitor centres are part of our 'Inreach' engagement programme, but it has been a busy season for the Outreach and Engagement team. The engagement programme for 2025 continued to have a focus on young people to help every child under 11 have a Dartmoor experience, as stated in the Dartmoor Partnership Plan 2021-2026.

- 4.4.2 To reach audiences who might not engage with us normally we have worked with partner organisations around the edge of the National Park to deliver our activities. This included the Rotary Club's Yelverton Funday, Hello Buckfastleigh, Langafor Trust's Black2Nature event, the Neon run with Active Devon at Simmons Park and the National Trust's Autumn celebration at Parke. We also worked with Refugees Rock- asylum seekers and refugees of all ages and backgrounds.
- 4.4.3 We also ran three larger events for families, working with partners and colleagues. Highlights included the popular Rainforest Discovery Day working with Natural England for 229 people, a slightly soggy Meldon Wildlife Festival supported by many local groups around Okehampton for over 150 people and this year we took Dartmoor to Exeter City Centre as part of our History Hunters at RAMM event reaching over 300 people. We also worked closely with colleagues in Access and across the organisation to run a range of walks and activities as part of launch of the refreshed Dartmoor Outdoor Festival.
- 4.4.4 These events can only run with the support of various teams across DNPA, volunteers, partner organisations and the support of the comms team to help us promote and support the events. This can be through dedicated email newsletters which go to more than 3,000 subscribers and for the events mentioned in 4.5.3 these newsletters attracted a click rate of between 42% and 45%, where anything around 40% is considered positive. These events also secured media coverage, particularly in local media outlets such as The Moorlander, Tavistock Times, Mid Devon Advertiser, BBC Radio Devon among others.
- 4.4.5 Ranger Ralph continues to be very popular, with the nearly 70 members coming from across Devon and beyond to attend the monthly events. Ranger Ralph events included sessions on Dartmoor stories, a three Tors challenge and a spooky Halloween torch walk in the woods Ralph did though lose one of his greatest advocates when we said an emotional farewell to Ranger Ralph Club stalwart Bill Allen who retired as a Ranger this year.
- 4.4.6 The Outreach vehicle had another busy outreach year attending a variety of formal engagements such as local shows and events both on and off Dartmoor and informal outreach across Dartmoor at popular car park locations. This summer the team on the Outreach vehicle engaged with nearly 7000 people. Highlights included delivering three days of sessions as part of West Devon's Junior Life Skills programme for year 6 Primary school children. We also supported an event run by Devon County Council at Broadleas (Haytor) for families with SEND children and a Multiagency day in Tavistock supporting the Ranger service.
- 4.4.7 The Outreach and Education team deliver the formal education element of their work through a school's programme that is supported by our wonderful volunteer education guides. This enables us to deliver Dartmoor experience for under 11s and enables us to reach a more diverse audience than we can solely through public events. This summer we delivered 37 school sessions to over 1000 young people. These sessions have been varied and have included an introduction to Dartmoor, geology, rivers, the Bronze Age, 'Is Dartmoor a Wild Place?', a Rainforest Discovery Day and for one school the opportunity to visit the tor each of their classes is named after. We have been able to expand our offer again this year and remove barriers

for five qualifying schools to date through National Parks Partnerships funding which covered the cost of the trip and critically the coach hire.

- 4.4.8 Dartmoor Youth Rangers (DYR) programme is open to anyone aged 12-17 and takes place across the whole of the national park. This programme allows young people to develop their knowledge and understanding of Dartmoor's special qualities and how different projects and organisations work together to manage nature, history, farming, and recreational access in harmony to protect and preserve the national park. The young people develop skills in various landscape management techniques and appropriate use of the tools and equipment required for the task at hand. January 2025 to November 2025 has seen 53 young people participate in the DYR programme at 16 different events.
- 4.4.9 Participants in the Girls Do Dartmoor (GDD) programmes are girls who are likely to struggle with anxiety, low confidence or self-esteem, social interactions, and/or do not engage with physical activity. They take part in a wide range of activities that help them discover and learn about their local protected landscape, enjoy and build a connection with it, and receive the contribution that nature has on personal wellbeing. The Girls Do Dartmoor programme has engaged 41 young people from 4 local secondary schools since April 2025. The Girls Do Dartmoor Programme and Kats Kloster Shadbolt (programme lead) won the "New Perspectives" category of Campaign for National Park's Park Protector Awards this year as well as the People's Choice Award.
- 4.4.10 Through the Pine Martens Bounce Back project we have delivered two Nights Under the Stars (NUTS) events in August this year for 23 attendees from SPACE and Dartmoor Youth Rangers, aged 12-18. These were delivered at Shallowford Farm, supported by the staff there.
- 4.4.11 We have supported PeatFest South West a project lead by Art and Energy to celebrate peatland across the south west. Working with colleagues in the Southwest Peatland Partnership and National Trust we helped young people to make a connection to the peatlands of Dartmoor, running activities at the visitor centres, creating a bog theme at Meldon Wildlife festival and supporting the Youth Rangers to take part.
- 4.4.12 Through the National Lottery Heritage Funded programme Dartmoor's Dynamic Landscape (DDL) and the crowdfunding efforts of Dartmoor Preservation Association (DPA) we have secured increased staff capacity to enable us to continue offering Youth focused activities for the next five years including DYR, NUTS, GDD, Refugees Rock. These activities are led by our Community Engagement Ranger and will now be supported by an Assistant Community Engagement Ranger funded through DDL to support this work and the rest of the team.
- 4.4.13 The 3Ps campaign, which aims to educate and promote conversation around pees, poos, and periods in the outdoors for all people exploring the national park, is continuing to be well utilised by Ten Tors groups and other educators within the national park. There has been excellent positive feedback from both young people and group leaders.

- 4.4.14 Funding from National Parks Partnerships and AMEX enabled us to develop and deliver an innovative work experience residential for twenty 16–17-year-olds from local schools and colleges. Dartmoor Future Skills took place over 5 days in February half term. The residential had high impact and enabled the young people to experience a range of job roles which help protect and celebrate the National Park, from farming and drystone walling to working with an ecologist, restoring peatbogs, archaeology and taking part in adventurous activities.

## **4.5 Engagement Volunteers**

- 4.5.1 To support our ranger team we have continued to deploy a number of Engagement Volunteers at key honeypot sites including Haytor, Postbridge, Wistman's Wood track and Foggingtor. The weekends run from the beginning of April until the middle of September and Engagement Volunteers are available between 11:00 – 16:00 and relay key messages including dogs on leads throughout the lambing/bird nesting season and responsible backpack camping messages.
- 4.5.2 We are very grateful to the Engagement Volunteers, they are an important part of the Authority's approach to visitor management. They provide a 'warm welcome' and advice to visitors.

## **5 Limiting Damaging Activity**

- 5.1 We continued to use the using the bright yellow 'emergency signs' that were created in 2020 at sites across the national park as required. We have updated how these signs are affixed on posts and have reduced the size of some following feedback and ensuring their efficacy. We will be interrogating the data the Ranger team and marshals have collected this year on the Ranger App to ensure next year's signage provision is meeting the demands and evolving with the issues on the ground.
- 5.2 The team have maintained close liaison with The Commoners Council, Dartmoor Common Owners Association and the Fire Service to agree the local fire risk level on a weekly basis. We are also in the process of completely reviewing the suite of fire signage and producing new ones to be erected depending on the agreed fire risk level.

### **Dartmoor Marshals**

- 5.3 We managed to secure partnership support for the sixth year to deploy the 'Dartmoor Marshals', who engage and help educate the public at a number of key sites across Dartmoor from May through to the beginning of September, with a concentration on weekends and bank holidays. This is a partnership project supported by the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner, National Trust, Woodland Trust, Duchy of Cornwall, South West Lakes Trust, Forestry England, Dartmoor Common Owners Association and two private landowners.
- 5.4 The marshals recorded their work and interactions on the Ranger App, with 330 entries. These mainly dealt with overnight stays in motorhomes, 'fly-camping' (roadside or other non-permitted locations) including associated open fires, dogs off leads (prior to the end of July) as well as offering a presence into the early evening. In total the Marshals worked 858 hours covering 49 evenings over summer 2025.



- 5.5 As well as being a valuable support to DNPA Rangers and partners, the marshals value to the Police is highlighted by their work in stopping a variety of anti-social behaviour and ensuring that incidents are recorded through the proper channels.

### **Ranger Liaison**

- 5.6 The team entered its tenth year supporting Speedwatch. Often joined by the Police or Speed detector van team. The team continued the Dogs on Dartmoor campaign this year and worked in partnership with the Police and the Dartmoor Livestock Protection Society. Relationships with organisations and partners have been enhanced through the Dartmoor Rural Crime Initiative (DRCI) and the sharing of data and ideas. The DRCI includes Dartmoor Commoners' Council, Dartmoor Common Landowners Association, Devon and Cornwall Police, Devon County Council, Devon Fire and Rescue Service, Forestry Commission, National Trust, Natural England, South West Lakes Trust and Woodland Trust amongst others.
- 5.7 The team have been working with the Health and Safety Executive and the Commoners' Council to implement a plan to reduce the risk or likelihood of cattle incidents on Dartmoor. We have produced an online reporting tool for reporting cattle incidents, with the reports being sent directly to Commoners Council for action as appropriate and have designed and procured 120 new signs that have been erected across the moor by the Ranger Team. We have also worked with the BBC to get the message out to the wider general public, and it featured on their website, social media, television and radio over one weekend in early November.

### **Volunteer Wardens**

- 5.8 The Volunteer Wardens team and other regular Volunteers (such as Haytor Second Sunday members) make up over 70 people who regularly help the Ranger Team in a multitude of ways throughout the seasons - such as surveying, patrolling, site visits, practical work and support. Their support in limiting and countering damaging activity on Dartmoor cannot be understated.

## **6 Financial Implications**

- 6.1 We used agreed funds to support each area of the Authority's work but should highlight our thanks to the Dartmoor Preservation Association for their contribution to work of the Community Engagement Ranger; to Defra for the Access for All funds; Generation Green 2 for support of our programmes to allow all children to visit Dartmoor the age of 11 and all of those organisations and individuals who supported the work of the Dartmoor Marshals. Finally, the time that our volunteers have generously given to support education, events and engagement is hugely appreciated and enables the Authority to achieve so much more that benefits Dartmoor.

## **7 Conclusion / Recommendation**

- 7.1 Our visitor management plan for the National Park, with active involvement and support from a range of partners including statutory bodies, third sector organisation and private landowners, ensures continuity of message and the greatest engagement with visitors.

- 7.2 We continue to work with landowners, commoners and other stakeholders to ensure that those who visit Dartmoor do so responsibly and ensure that Dartmoor offers a warm welcome with clear guidance and advice.
- 7.3 Officers will continue to work with partners to coordinate plans for 2026 and with the Dartmoor Rural Crime Initiative to ensure that coordination of message and support of projects and messaging.
- 7.4 The success of the visitor engagement is largely due to the support of our partners, the volunteers who gave their time, the dedication of staff and the engagement and support of the public.
- 7.5 Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

RICHARD DRYSDALE